



NCPE

The National Commission
for the Promotion of Equality

ANNUAL REPORT 2025





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What We Stand For

The National Commission for the Promotion of Equality is an independent Equality Body entrusted by Chapter 456 of the Laws of Malta to safeguard equality on the basis of sex, family responsibilities, religion/belief, age, sexual orientation, race/ethnic origin and gender identity, gender expression and sex characteristics in employment as well as access to vocational/professional training or banks and financial institutions.

The NCPE's remit is also established in the field of gender, as well as race/ethnic origin in access to and provision of goods and services, via two legal notices namely, Legal Notice 181 of 2008 (Access to Goods and Services and

their Supply Regulations) and Legal Notice 85 of 2007 (Equal Treatment of Persons Order).

Legal Notice 173 of 2016 (Exercise of Rights Conferred on Workers (Freedom of Movement) Regulations), establishes the NCPE's remit with regards to the freedom of movement for workers in the EU.

In 2024, the NCPE's remit was widened as per Legal Notice 376 of 2024 (Promotion of Gender Balance among Directors of Listed Companies Regulations). These regulations transpose Article 10 of the Women on Boards Directive which delineates the roles of the designated bodies for the promotion of gender balance in listed companies.



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Prime Minister's Message



Hon. Dr Robert Abela, Prime Minister

Democracy thrives when equality and equity are actively upheld: these are not abstract ideals; they are the foundation of a society where every individual can live with dignity, families can feel secure, and communities and enterprises can innovate and prosper sustainably. In such a society, opportunity is determined by potential, not by circumstance, gender, age, ability, ethnicity, belief, or background. Equality and inclusion are not simply moral imperatives, they are essential cornerstones of a thriving democracy and a prosperous, cohesive society.

Since its establishment, the National Commission for the Promotion of Equality (NCPE) has been at the heart of Malta's commitment to equality, fairness and inclusion. Through successive strategies, action plans, and initiatives, the Commission has translated principles into action, guiding policy, raising awareness, and strengthening institutional capacity to ensure that equality is not just a goal, but a reality experienced by all. The NCPE's work touches every part of society, from families and workplaces to schools and communities, reinforcing the idea that fairness and opportunity must be embedded in every aspect of national life.

The Commission's work is grounded in evidence, supported by rigorous monitoring and reporting that informs policy, fosters transparency, and sustains public dialogue. Legislative progress has been a central pillar

of this mission, with laws that protect against discrimination and reaffirm that fairness, respect, and equal opportunity are non-negotiable in a democratic society. These legal safeguards are not merely protections; they serve as guiding principles for the Government and affirm our nation's commitment to justice and dignity for all.

Malta's Presidency of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe in 2025 provided a European platform to champion these commitments internationally, promoting human rights, equality, and social inclusion. At home, the NCPE continues this work, ensuring that global standards translate into tangible improvements in everyday life, while our principles of equality and fairness also resonate beyond our shores, setting an example for others to follow.

We must be clear: inequality is not accidental; it is often sustained by structural barriers within our economic, social, and institutional systems. Discrimination rarely occurs along a single axis, as many individuals face overlapping and compounded disadvantages arising from multiple characteristics. For these reasons, Government has taken important steps and remains committed to addressing these realities. Wherever inequality and discrimination exist, we are dedicated to promoting substantive equality and ensuring that opportunity is not limited by circumstances beyond an individual's control.

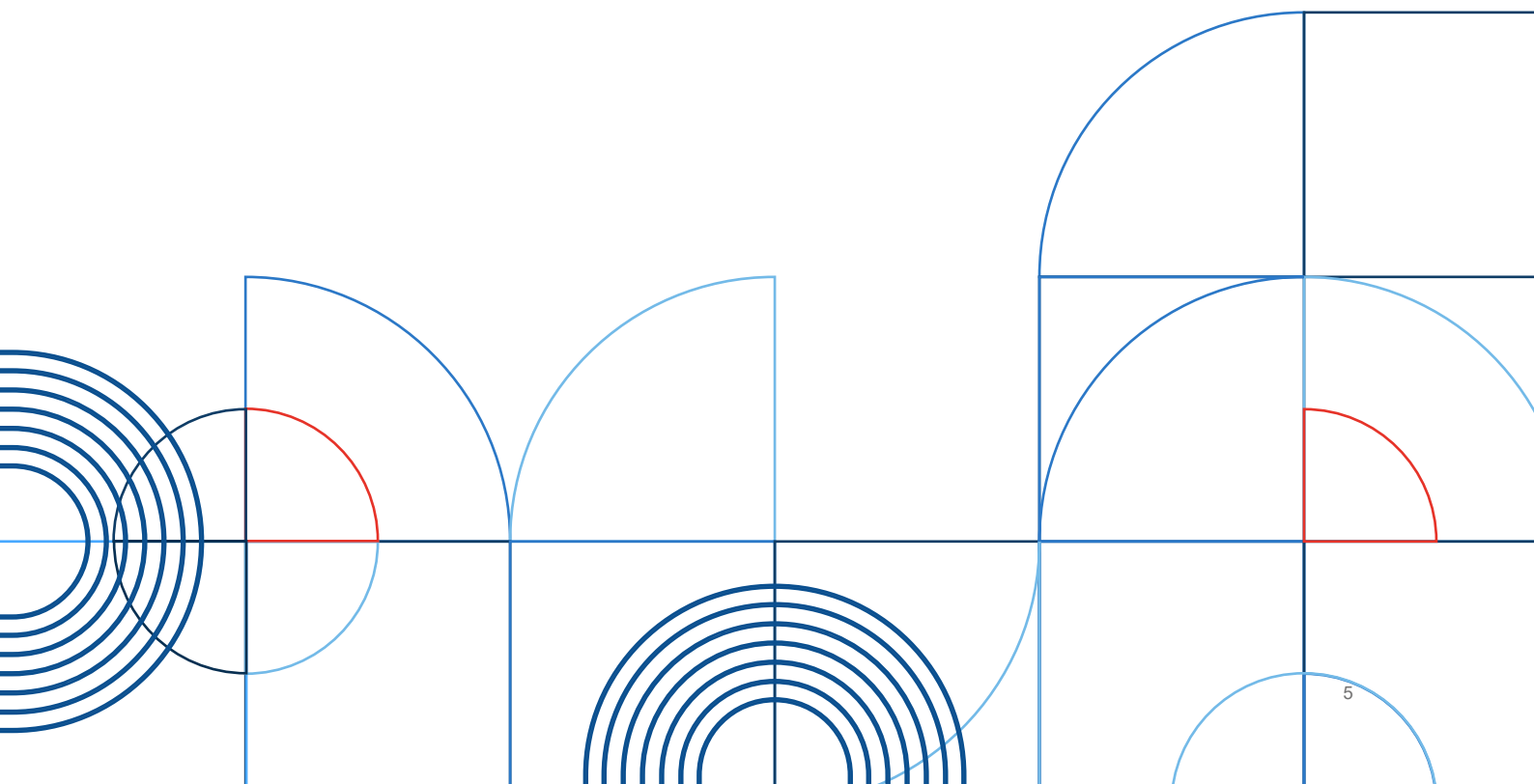
"Since its establishment, the National Commission for the Promotion of Equality (NCPE) has been at the heart of Malta's commitment to equality, fairness and inclusion."

Looking ahead, the pursuit of equality must remain dynamic, responsive, and forward-looking. Social change, demographic shifts, and economic transformation demand policies that address structural inequalities and emerging forms of discrimination. These efforts are essential to sustaining social cohesion, enhancing quality of life, and strengthening the resilience of our democracy.

In the end, equality is not merely a policy, it is the heartbeat of a thriving society where every person has the opportunity to reach their full potential. The NCPE's work reminds us that

fairness, inclusion, and respect are the building blocks of a stronger, more cohesive nation.

Together - as government, civil society, social partners, and communities - we remain committed to breaking down barriers, advancing equality, and empowering every individual to thrive. In doing so, we ensure that Malta remains a society where democracy is strengthened through inclusion, and where every citizen has the freedom, support, and opportunity to flourish.



Parliamentary Secretary's Message



Hon. Rebecca Buttigieg,
Parliamentary Secretary for Equality and Reforms

Malta has made significant strides in advancing equality in the last year, driven by the Government's commitment to social justice and inclusion supported by the National Commission for the Promotion of Equality, which continues to guide, monitor, and champion equality across all sectors.

Promoting work-life balance remained a central policy focus, recognising that wellbeing at home and opportunity at work are complementary foundations of a just society. This was reflected in the extension of the urgent family leave; the expansion of state-funded paternity leave to self-employed fathers and second parents; and increased paid carers' leave for public sector employees. These measures support families in managing caregiving responsibilities while enabling women and men to remain active in the labour market.

Acknowledging the NCPE research and consultations on the topic, government took decisive steps to strengthen family wellbeing and address Malta's low fertility rate. Revised tax bands now distinguish between parents with one child and those with two or more, with annual revisions planned through 2028 to support parents and encourage family growth.

The Government also sought to support families experiencing pregnancy loss and bereavement. Paid miscarriage leave was introduced for couples who experience stillbirth at 22 weeks or later; alongside paid parental

bereavement leave for parents who lose a child under the age of 18.

Moreover, efforts to reduce financial burdens for women included removing VAT from essential menstrual products, and installing free period product dispensers in more than 50 secondary schools across Malta and Gozo are helping to address menstrual stigma.

Economic equality was reinforced through new legislation which promotes equitable pay practices, enhances transparency in working conditions, and upholds principles of equality as enshrined in the employment law.

The adoption of the second National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security 2025–2030 underscored our continued dedication to integrating a gender perspective in peace and security efforts, in line with the United Nations Resolution 1325.

The fight against domestic violence remained a national priority. Prevention efforts were strengthened through an agreement supporting an education campaign aimed at reducing economic dependency, often a root cause of abuse and control, while protection was enhanced through panic alarms for victims at extreme risk.

Malta's commitment to LGBTIQ+ equality was reinforced, and the first-place ranking on the Rainbow Europe Map was maintained for the tenth consecutive year.

"Promoting work-life balance remained a central policy focus, recognising that wellbeing at home and opportunity at work are complementary foundations of a just society."

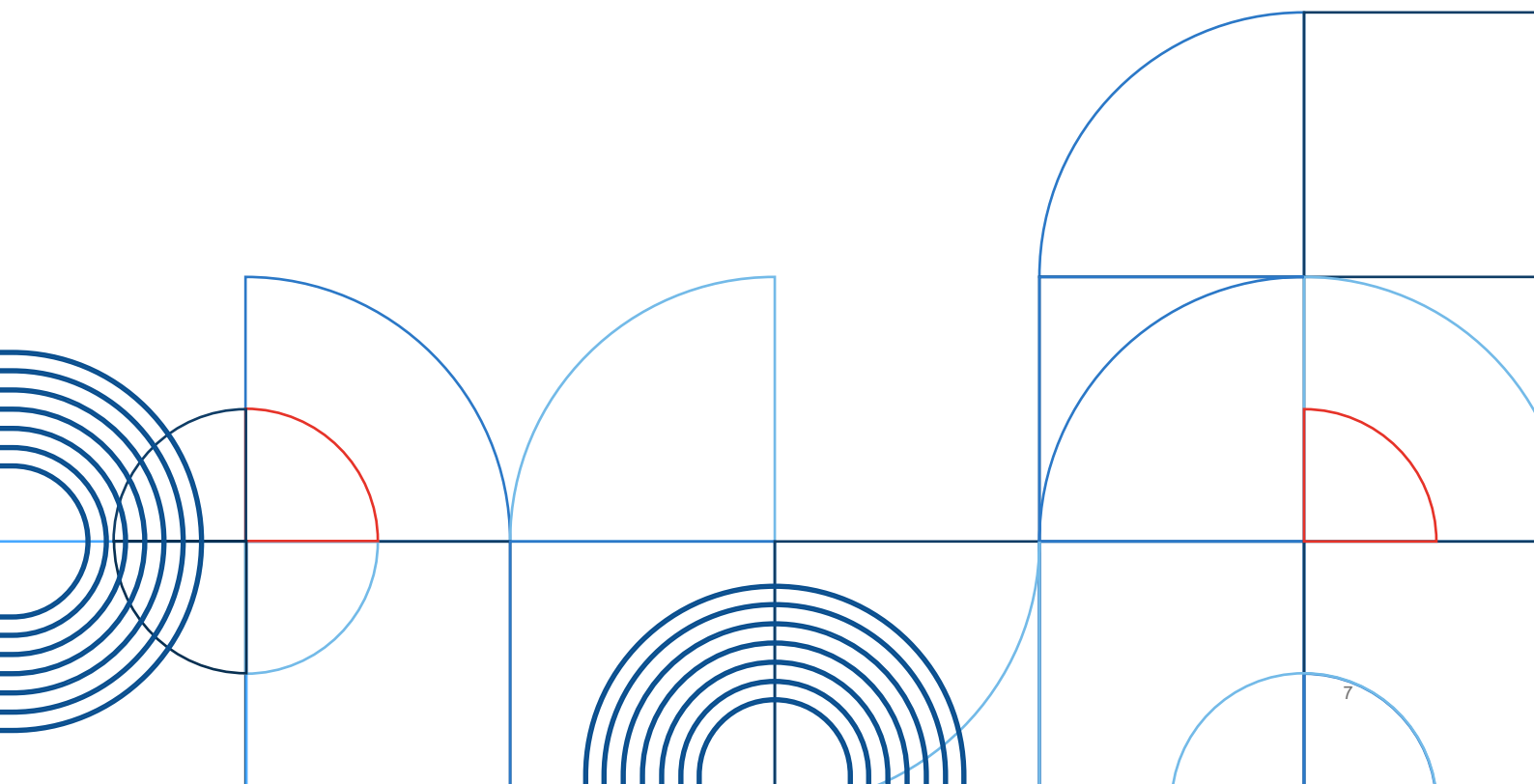
Malta also championed human dignity and equality during the Presidency of the Council of Europe. Indeed, the adoption of the first Recommendation on the Rights of Intersex Persons was a historic milestone. Other key events included the 12th IDAHOT+ Forum on SOGIESC equality, conferences on human trafficking, gender equality, and combating hate speech.

Significant strides were also made in combating racism through the launch of the Integration Strategy and Action Plan 2025–2030 and the National Action Plan Against Racism 2025–2030 reinforcing efforts towards social cohesion and inclusion. The Government also

strengthened its response to human trafficking through a strategic partnership at regional and international levels to tackle human trafficking, as well as the continued implementation of Malta's National Strategy and Action Plan against Human Trafficking.

The NCPE's role in Malta's equality infrastructure remains pivotal, and ongoing consultations on the Equality Bill aim to further strengthen its mandate in line with the EU Directive on standards for equality bodies.

All these developments reflect our shared commitment to building a more inclusive society, one in which equality is not merely an aspiration, but a lived reality for all.



Commissioner's Message



Ms Renee Laiviera, NCPE Commissioner

The year 2025 marked another productive year for the National Commission for the Promotion of Equality (NCPE), as we continued to strengthen our efforts to promote equality and combat discrimination across Maltese society.

The investigation of complaints of alleged discrimination is a core responsibility of the NCPE as the national equality body. As the NCPE Commissioner, I am entrusted with overseeing these investigations to ensure that equality is safeguarded in cases of unfair treatment. During 2025, the Commission initiated 18 investigations, consistent with previous years.

Equally central to the NCPE's mandate is the promotion of equality. Throughout 2025, the Commission strengthened its outreach and awareness-raising efforts through a broad range of initiatives. Our engagement across traditional and social media increased, with a stronger presence on television and radio programmes, as well as on social media. In addition, five conferences were organised during the year, a significant increase compared to previous years, fostering informed equality-related deliberations on work-life balance, gender-balance in leadership positions, racism and xenophobia, masculinity and gender stereotypes, and the role of equality in inclusive workplaces.

Outreach activities remained a key focus, with the NCPE participating in the Public Service Expo 2025 and Freshers' Weeks at the University of Malta, Junior College, and MCAST. Training continued to be a cornerstone of preventive

efforts, with 73 training sessions delivered to 1,305 participants from private and public entities, healthcare workers, teachers, students, and others to strengthen understanding of equality and non-discrimination.

In parallel, as part of our endeavour to strengthen policy-development, input to national, EU and international policy documents is regularly submitted, while actively participating in meetings and conferences to exchange knowledge and best practices.

Recognising the NCPE's commitment to strengthening gender equality, its remit was recently extended to promote, analyse, monitor and support gender balance on boards of listed companies as per the Women on Boards Directive. During the year, the NCPE liaised with the companies that fall within the scope of this Directive to compile and analyse relevant data, finding that three of these seven listed companies were in line with at least one of the Directive's objectives to progress towards a more gender balanced representation among the directors of their boards.

The NCPE's Equality Mark Certification continues to be recognised as an important endorsement by organisations hailing from both the public and private sectors. The organisations that demonstrate a commitment to fostering gender equality in the workplace increased, reaching 155 by the end of 2025 and collectively employing over 37,600 individuals in total. Additionally, since its launch, four

"The NCPE's Equality Mark Certification continues to be recognised as an important endorsement by organisations hailing from both the public and private sectors."

organisations were awarded the NCPE's Equal Pay Certification, supporting efforts to ensure equal pay for work of equal value among women and men.

The EU co-funded project 'Strengthening Knowledge on Integration and Non-Discrimination', which addressed the specific needs and challenges faced by migrants and Muslim communities in Malta, was concluded this year. Through this project, training on non-discrimination was provided to different groups. Awareness on racism, Afrophobia, anti-Muslim hatred, and discrimination was raised with the general public. Additionally, the project produced a study on the experiences and needs of people of African descent and members of the Muslim community, along with an NCPE action plan aimed at strengthening its work with these communities.

'The Future of the Human Workforce: Embracing Change, Challenges, and Opportunities' is another EU-funded project in which the NCPE participated with eight partners

from different EU countries. In this context, the project's online conference on the role of equality in the evolving nature of work within a rapidly changing environment was extended for participation at the national level through the organisation of a hybrid Conference, which produced very positive results.

Our commitment strongly supports us in moving forward the agenda for an inclusive and fair society in our country. In this context, I would like to express my sincere appreciation to the dedicated staff of the NCPE for their continued commitment, as well as to all stakeholders, partners, and individuals who collaborated with us and supported our work throughout the year.

Looking ahead, the NCPE remains steadfast in advancing a more just and equal society particularly with the anticipated enhancement of the Commission's mandate, that will give a higher status to the equality body, enabling it to better address emerging challenges and to further strengthen equality and non-discrimination in Malta.

The Commissioner and Commission Members in 2025

The Commission is composed of eight members – one Commissioner and seven Commission members. It regularly meets to discuss the work and direction of the NCPE executive, to address policy issues related to equality and non-discrimination, and to issue public statements.

Commissioner:



Renee Laiviera

The Commission Members:



Maria Victoria Borg



Jacob Callus



Dr Paula Cauchi Meachen



Isaak Koroma



Joanne Sciberras
Edwards

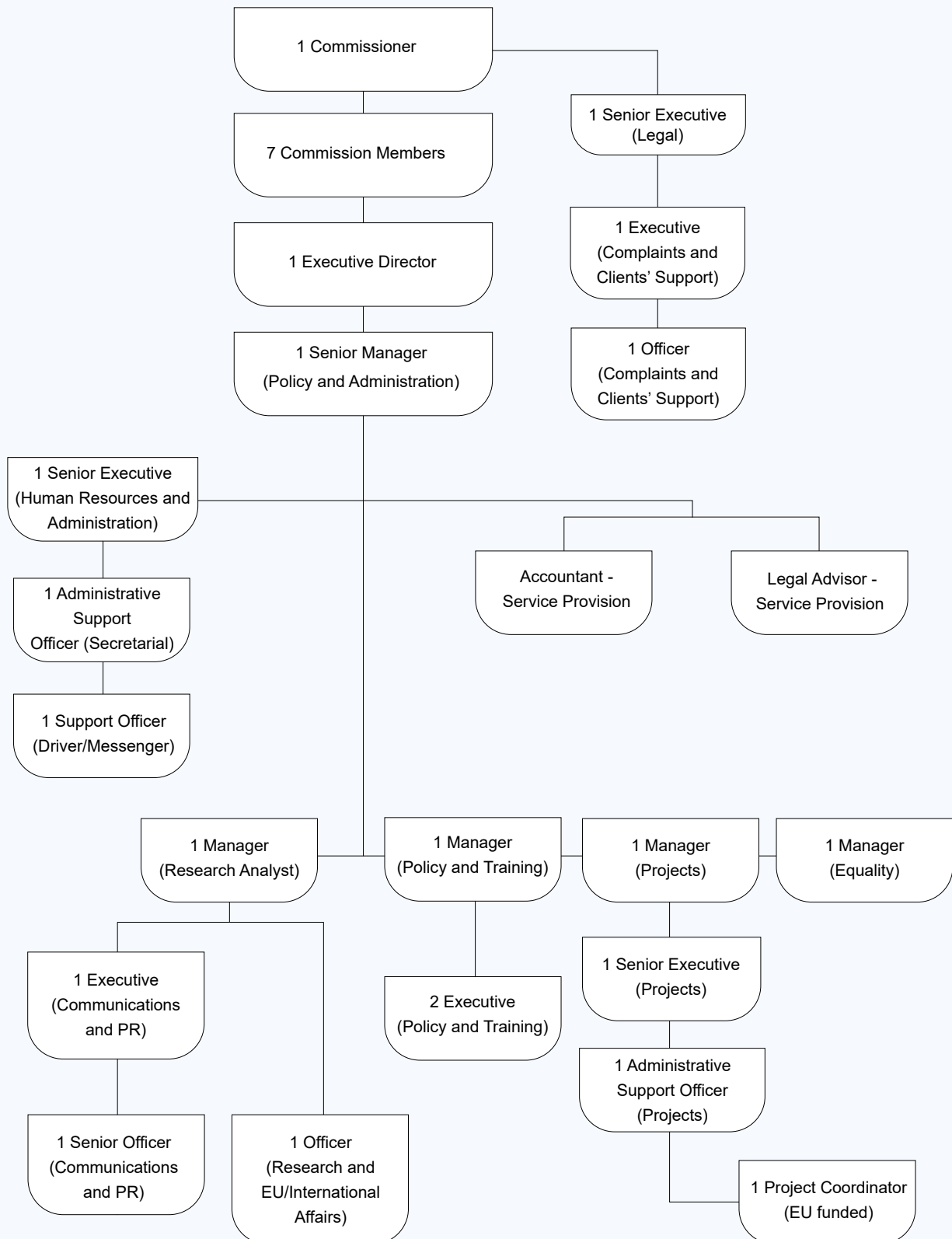


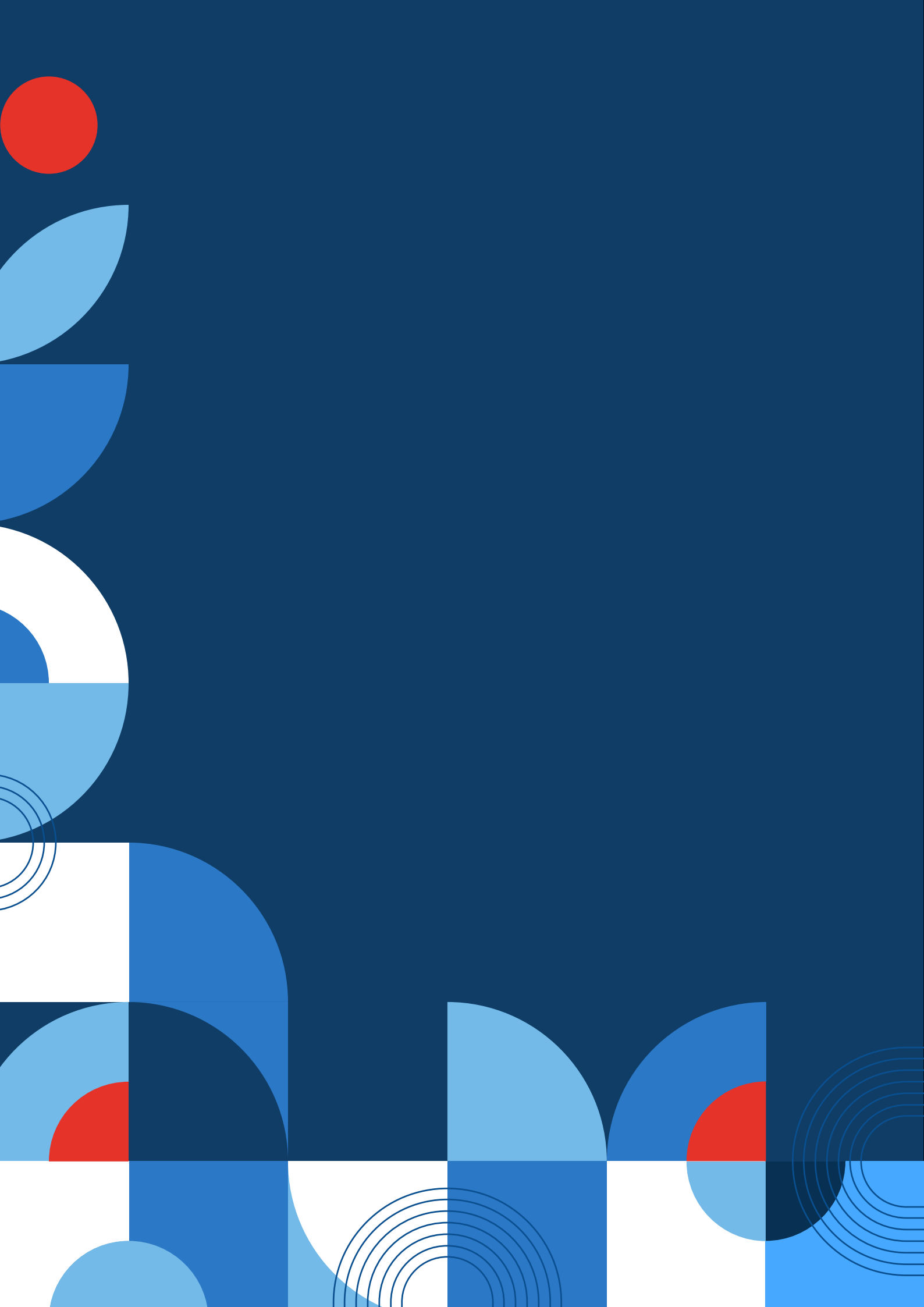
Dr Rachael Scicluna



Dr Wilbert Tabone

NCPE Organisational Chart 2025





1. Equality in Malta

1.1 AN OVERVIEW OF DEVELOPMENTS IN 2025

This section highlights key issues, developments, news, trends, and publications related to equality in 2025, with a focus on the social identities falling within the NCPE's remit. These include gender and family responsibilities, age, sexual orientation, race/ethnic origin, religion/belief, and gender identity, gender expression, and sex characteristics.



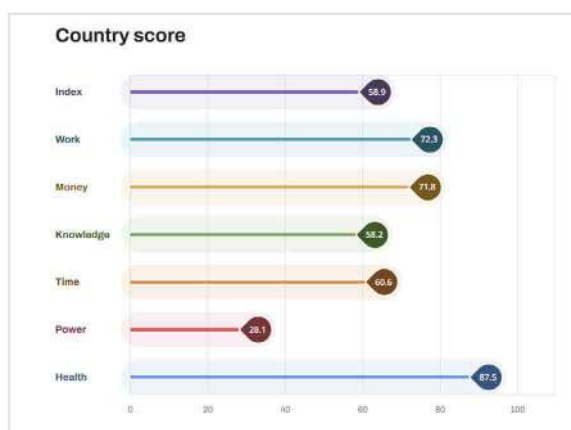
The NCPE staff

GENDER AND FAMILY RESPONSIBILITIES

Women's participation in the **labour market** has continued to improve in recent years. By Q3 2025¹, the employment rate for women stood at 75.1%, compared to 87.0% for men. The gender employment gap has been gradually narrowing, decreasing from 13.7 percentage points in 2023 to 13.1 percentage points in 2024 and 12.9 percentage points in 2025.

However, gender-disaggregated data on part-time employment reveals a persistent imbalance. The proportion of women in part-time employment increased from 16.0% in 2024 to 18.3% in 2025. This indicates that while women are entering the labour market at higher rates, they continue to face disadvantages in relation to the type of work they perform and the associated income. Family caregiving responsibilities, which remain disproportionately borne by women, are a key contributing factor to this reality.

The 2025 European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) Gender Equality Index (GEI)² further confirms the persistence of gender gaps in labour participation and caregiving. According to the Index, 37% of women, compared to 14% of men, spend more than five hours daily on childcare, while 52% of women, compared to 25% of men, perform household chores on a daily basis.



EIGE Gender Equality Index – Malta

The GEI assesses progress across six core domains—work, money, knowledge, time, power, and health—as well as two cross-cutting domains: violence and intersecting inequalities.

Malta's ranking declined slightly compared to the previous year, falling from 13th place to 16th place among EU Member States. Malta scored 58.9 points out of 100, where 1 represents total inequality and 100 represents full equality. Despite this decline, the score reflects significant progress over the past decade, increasing from 46.1 points in 2015 to 50.3 in 2020 and 58.9 in 2025.

Malta performed strongly in the domains of **knowledge** and **health**, ranking 8th in the EU in both. Performance in the knowledge domain was driven by high educational attainment and participation rates, while the strong ranking in health was supported by Malta's 2nd place position in health behaviour, reflecting lower engagement in harmful practices and higher participation in healthy habits.

The most challenging domain remains **money**, where Malta ranked 21st with a score of 71.8 points. Notably, Malta has the largest gender pension gap in the EU, with men receiving pensions that are on average 40% higher than those received by women.

Some progress was recorded in the domain of **power**, with Malta's score increasing by 14.2 points since 2020, driven by gains in political and social power. Nevertheless, Malta still ranked 16th in this domain in 2025.

Violence against women remains a serious concern. According to the 2024 EU Gender-Based Violence Survey, 24% of women in Malta have experienced physical and/or sexual violence since the age of 15.

During the 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence, three ministries—those responsible for housing, the family, and equality—jointly announced a new scheme to subsidise rent for victims of **domestic violence** undergoing separation proceedings. This initiative targets individuals in vulnerable situations who do not qualify for existing housing schemes³.

1 National Statistics Office (NSO), December 2025, *Labour Force Survey: Q3/2025* and National Statistics Office (NSO), October 2025, *Key Indicators on the Labour Market: 2024*

2 <https://eige.europa.eu/gender-equality-index/2025/MT>

3 Department of Information, Reference Number: PR252171



NCPE Commissioner, Ms Renee Laiviera, participating in the Right to Disconnect Conference

In addition, a strategic partnership agreement was signed between the Government and Valletta Cruise Port to strengthen cooperation on the prevention of **human trafficking**. The agreement aims to enhance the capacity of Valletta Cruise Port employees to identify victims of human trafficking and to respond safely and effectively to situations involving abuse and exploitation of vulnerable persons⁴.

In January, the NCPE organised a conference to discuss the findings of its research study entitled *Perceptions and Attitudes of Women and Men in Malta towards Work-Life Balance: With a Specific Focus on Family Size*⁵. Conducted against the backdrop of Malta having the lowest **fertility rate** in the EU, the study highlights how sustained conflict between work demands and family life continues to shape attitudes towards having children.

Despite high employment rates for both women and men, the findings reveal significant gender disparities in how work-family conflict is experienced, with mothers disproportionately affected. These dynamics have a direct impact



NCPE Commissioner, Ms Renee Laiviera, discussing Malta's fertility rate and work-life balance

on fertility intentions. The study provides an important evidence base for policymakers, employers, and stakeholders to design holistic, family-friendly policies that support a better balance between professional and personal lives, benefiting families, and Maltese society as a whole.

In the Budget presented for 2026⁶, the Government announced several financial measures aimed at supporting **families** and increasing Malta's fertility rate. These included the widening of income tax bands for parents - applicable to families with children up to 18 years of age, or up to 23 years if the child is in formal education. Increases were also announced in

4 Department of Information, Reference Number: PR251847

5 <https://ncpe.gov.mt/wp-content/uploads/2025/01/NCPE-Press-Statement-Work-Life-Balance-Conference-2025-EN.pdf>

6 <https://finance.gov.mt/budget26/>



Panel discussion during the NCPE Work-Life Balance Conference

children's allowance for families earning less than €30,000, as well as in grants related to childbirth and adoption.

While acknowledging the substantial financial support introduced, the NCPE reiterated the need for a **holistic approach** to address the multiple and intersecting factors contributing to Malta's low fertility rate⁷. In a statement, the NCPE emphasised the importance introducing new family-friendly measures while extending already existing ones. Its recommendations included increasing paid parent-related leave by extending maternity leave to six months, paternity leave to four weeks, and parental leave to six months on full pay, with three months allocated on a 'use-it-or-lose-it' basis.

The NCPE also recommended strengthening **family-related services**, such as extending free childcare services to all parents, introducing fiscal incentives for companies offering flexible work arrangements, and piloting shorter working weeks to assess their impact on work-life balance and productivity.



NCPE Commissioner, Ms Renee Laiviera, addressing the NCPE Work-Life Balance Conference

In 2025, more than 50 secondary schools began installing vending machines providing free **menstruation products** to students⁸. Through the project *End the Stigma. Period.*, approximately 11,000 students will have access to these products free of charge.

In September, an agreement was signed between the Human Rights Directorate within the Parliamentary Secretariat for Equality and Reforms and the Department of Gender and Sexualities at the University of Malta to launch

⁷ https://ncpe.gov.mt/wp-content/uploads/2025/10/NCPE-Press-Statement_Budget-2026-EN.pdf

⁸ Department of Information, Reference Number: PR251823

the **academic journal** *ASTARTE*, which focuses on scholarly research on various dimensions of gender and sexuality in Mediterranean countries⁹.

In January, the publication ***Measuring Gender Equality*** was jointly issued by the Human Rights Directorate and the National Statistics Office. Spanning over 160 pages, the report covers population, health, social welfare, education, the labour market, crime, and political participation. Key findings include: the presence of a higher proportion of men than women in the population, longer life expectancy among women, higher female participation in tertiary education alongside a continued underrepresentation in science and technology fields, and the **underrepresentation** of women in employment and decision-making roles despite employment rates exceeding EU averages.

LGBTIQ+

For the tenth consecutive year, Malta ranked first on the **ILGA-Europe Rainbow Map Equality Index**, achieving a score of 88.83%¹⁰. Published annually, the Rainbow Map assesses 49 European countries, assigning scores ranging from 0% (systemic discrimination and serious human rights violations) to 100% (full equality and protection), based on legislation and policies affecting the human rights of LGBTIQ+ people.



ILGA Rainbow Map – Malta

Malta achieved a score of 100% in Hate Crime and Hate Speech, Legal Gender Recognition, and Civil Society Space; 99.94% in Family; 75.39% in Equality and Non-Discrimination; 66.67% in Asylum; and 50% in Intersex Bodily Integrity.

To further improve the situation of LGBTIQ+ people in Malta, ILGA-Europe recommended:

- advancing the **Equality Bill** to explicitly protect SOGIESC rights in the provision of goods, services, and healthcare;
- increasing transparency in **SOGIESC-based asylum procedures** through the publication of guidelines and improved NGO access to detained asylum seekers; and
- ensuring the presence of psychiatric professionals at the **Gender Wellbeing Clinic** to remove barriers to trans-specific healthcare.

Pride Week 2025, held in September, culminated in the **Pride March** in Valletta, organised by Allied Rainbow Communities¹¹. The event was attended by members of the LGBTIQ+ community, the Prime Minister, Dr Robert Abela, the Parliamentary Secretary for Equality and Reforms, Rebecca Buttigieg, and the Leader of the Opposition, Dr Alex Borg. A Pride March was also held in Gozo for the fourth consecutive year during the preceding week. The theme of Malta Pride 2025, *Equality from the Heart*, reflected a commitment to fostering a society in which everyone can live authentically, free from discrimination, and with equal opportunities to thrive.

As part of Pride Week, an assessment was conducted on the implementation of *Malta's LGBTIQ+ Equality Strategy and Action Plan 2023–2027*¹². Over the course of one year, more than 500 public officers—including educators, police officers, and employees of the Saint Vincent de Paule Residence—received training on various equality-related themes concerning LGBTIQ+ persons.

9 Department of Information, Reference Number: PR251637

10 <https://rainbowmap.ilga-europe.org/countries/malta/>

11 Department of Information, Reference Number: PR251559

12 Department of Information, Reference Number: PR251544

A coalition of LGBTIQ+ and HIV NGOs submitted feedback on the consultation process for **Malta's Sexual Health Strategy**¹³. While welcoming improvements, the coalition called for clearer implementation plans. Key recommendations included adopting a five-year budget, ensuring universal access to free treatment and PrEP/PEP, the integration of psychological support, improving recognition of diverse communities and Gozo-specific needs, and adopting a holistic, human rights-based approach to sexuality education and healthcare access.

AGE

The Budget for 2026¹⁴ introduced measures benefiting approximately 100,000 pensioners, who will receive an additional €10 per week in their **pensions**, inclusive of the cost-of-living adjustment. Further targeted increases were announced for older pensioners and widows, alongside enhanced carer grants and bonuses. Pensions for individuals aged 75 to 79 will increase from €350 to €425 per month, while those aged 80 and over will see their pensions rise from €450 to €525 per month.

Individuals born before 1962 will also benefit from pension increases as part of an adjustment process aimed at reducing disparities with those born after 1962.

In December, the Government launched a public consultation on regulating **social media**, alongside the publication of a green paper¹⁵. The reform aims to protect children and vulnerable groups while safeguarding freedom of expression. In the context of rising stress, anxiety, bullying and harassment linked to social media, a technical committee will present recommendations to Cabinet after the consultation, exploring options such as age limits and profile verification.

RACE/ETHNIC ORIGIN AND RELIGION/BELIEF

In June 2025, the EU-funded project **SKIN: Strengthening Knowledge on Integration and Non-Discrimination**, implemented by the NCPE in partnership with Aditus Foundation, concluded after over two years¹⁶. The project aimed to identify and address discrimination experienced by people of African descent and Muslims in Malta through capacity-building initiatives, training, focus groups, and awareness-raising activities.

As part of this project, the NCPE published the report *Lived Experiences of African and Muslim Communities in Malta: A Focus Group Perspective*¹⁷. The report highlights the ambivalent and layered realities experienced by people of African descent and/or Muslims living in Malta. Most participants recounted stories of kindness, friendship, and care, where being a person of African descent and/or Muslim was not seen as an obstacle to inclusion or to leading meaningful lives.

These accounts, however, were often accompanied by experiences of discrimination, exclusion, or hostility, frequently rooted in the perception that they did not truly belong in Malta - that they were an "other," viewed as distant or dangerous. This sense of separation from the majority population was further compounded by language barriers, unstable or precarious legal status, and socio-economic challenges.

Women were also more likely to face additional difficulties due to their gender, in the context of even more unequal power relations, such as a higher risk of social exclusion and heightened fear of retaliation when reporting discrimination or harassment.

In practice, this condition of "otherness" contributed to experiences of exploitation in the workplace, challenges in integrating in the educational system, limited access to decent and stable housing, and obstacles in obtaining goods and services, including public services. It

13 <https://maltagayrights.org/news/sexual-health-strategy-ngo-response>

14 <https://finance.gov.mt/budget26/>

15 <https://reforms.gov.mt/wp-content/uploads/2025/12/GREEN-PAPER-REFORM-ENG.pdf>

16 <https://ncpe.gov.mt/projects-and-specific-initiatives/skin/>

17 <https://ncpe.gov.mt/wp-content/uploads/2025/06/SKIN-Focus-Group-Report-digital.pdf>



SKIN panel discussion with cultural mediators



A SKIN training session

also made many persons of African descent and Muslims hesitant to report cases of discrimination and harassment.

In November, the second **National Action Plan Against Racism 2025–2030**, entitled *Zero Tolerance to Racism*¹⁸, was launched. Building on the previous 2021–2023 plan, and informed by consultations with government entities, civil society, and international experts, the plan aims to combat racism, xenophobia, and intolerance.

It promotes a cohesive, inclusive, and fair society by strengthening legislation, improving

the prevention and reporting of hate crimes, promoting anti-racism training, enhancing data collection and research, increasing the participation of racialised communities, and establishing robust monitoring and accountability mechanisms through 2030.

18 <https://humanrights.gov.mt/wp-content/uploads/2025/11/NAPAR-2025-2030.pdf>



Signing of the NCPE Collective Agreement

THE EQUALITY BODY

The NCPE and the General Workers' Union (GWU) signed a **Collective Agreement** covering all employees of the Commission¹⁹. This second Collective Agreement applies to the period 2025–2030.

The Parliamentary Secretary for Equality and Reforms, Hon. Rebecca Buttigieg, stated that the commitment and dedication of NCPE staff are making a tangible difference in the lives of people who experience discrimination. She noted that the agreement complements other collective agreements being concluded across the public service, in line with the Government's objective of serving as a model employer in matters related to industrial relations.

The Commissioner, Renee Laiviera, emphasised that the agreement supports the retention of motivated and professional staff, ensuring that the NCPE remains well equipped

to address equality and non-discrimination issues affecting vulnerable segments of the population.

The GWU Secretary for the Government, Public Entities and Health Section, Kendrick Bondin, welcomed the conclusion of the agreement, noting that it provides employees with greater security and improved remuneration over the next five years.

Overall, the Collective Agreement strengthens the NCPE's capacity to retain experienced personnel and attract new staff with the necessary expertise in the field of equality and non-discrimination. Ultimately, it contributes to the strengthening of equality in Malta, particularly for individuals and groups in vulnerable situations.

¹⁹ <https://ncpe.gov.mt/wp-content/uploads/2025/05/NCPE-Press-Statement-EN.pdf>

1.2 STATISTICAL OVERVIEW

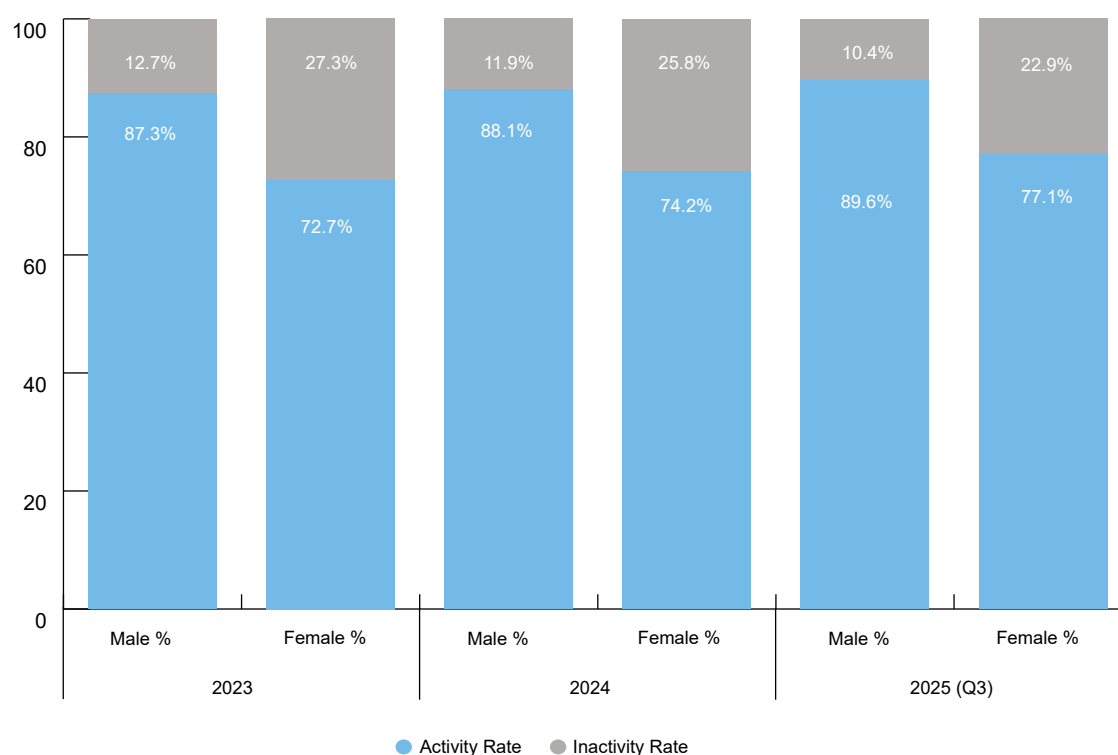
In the following section, sex-segregated data is being presented to illustrate the situation of gender participation in the spheres of employment, public administration, politics, the judiciary, education as well as in the media.

EMPLOYMENT

Table 1: Activity rates of women and men, divided by age in 2023, 2024 and 2025 (Q3)²⁰

Age	2023		2024		2025 (Q3)	
	M%	F%	M %	F %	M %	F %
15 - 24	58.3	52.3	58.6	52.8	60.4	52.3
25 - 54	96.4	83.7	96.6	85.0	96.9	87.6
55 - 64	69.7	44.4	71.9	45.7	76.6	50.7

Figure 1: Activity and inactivity rates of working-age women and men (15-64 years old) in 2023, 2024 and 2025 (Q3)²¹



²⁰ National Statistics Office (NSO), December 2025, Labour Force Survey: Q3/2025 and National Statistics Office (NSO), October 2025, Key Indicators on the Labour Market: 2024

²¹ Ibid.

Table 2: Employment rates of women and men, divided by age in 2023, 2024 and 2025 (Q3)²²

Age	2023		2024		2025 (Q3)	
	M %	F %	M %	F %	M %	F %
15 - 24	51.6	49.1	52.8	48.5	55.0	46.9
25 - 54	93.6	81.1	94.0	82.8	94.8	85.8
55 - 64	67.4	43.9	69.3	45.1	73.9	50.7

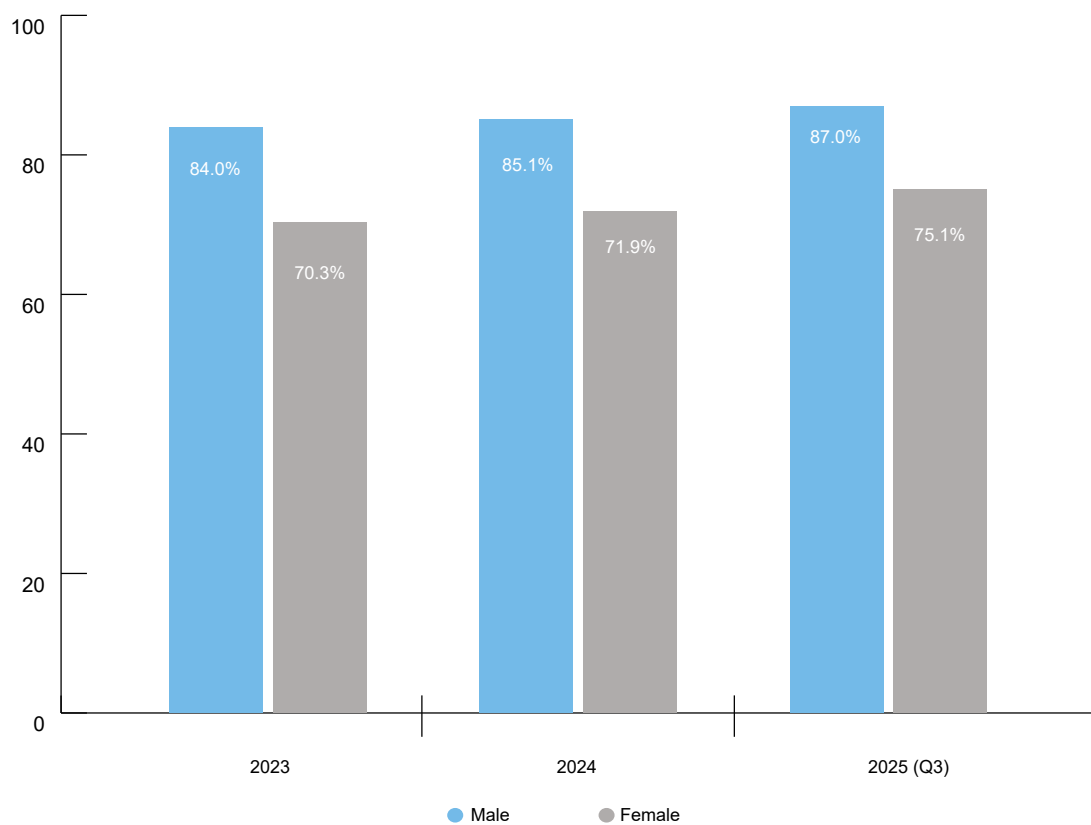
Figure 2: Employment rates of working-age women and men (15-64 years old) in 2023, 2024 and 2025 (Q3)²³²² Ibid.²³ Ibid.

Figure 3: Percentage of women and men having part-time as their main occupation in 2023, 2024 and 2025 (Q3)²⁴

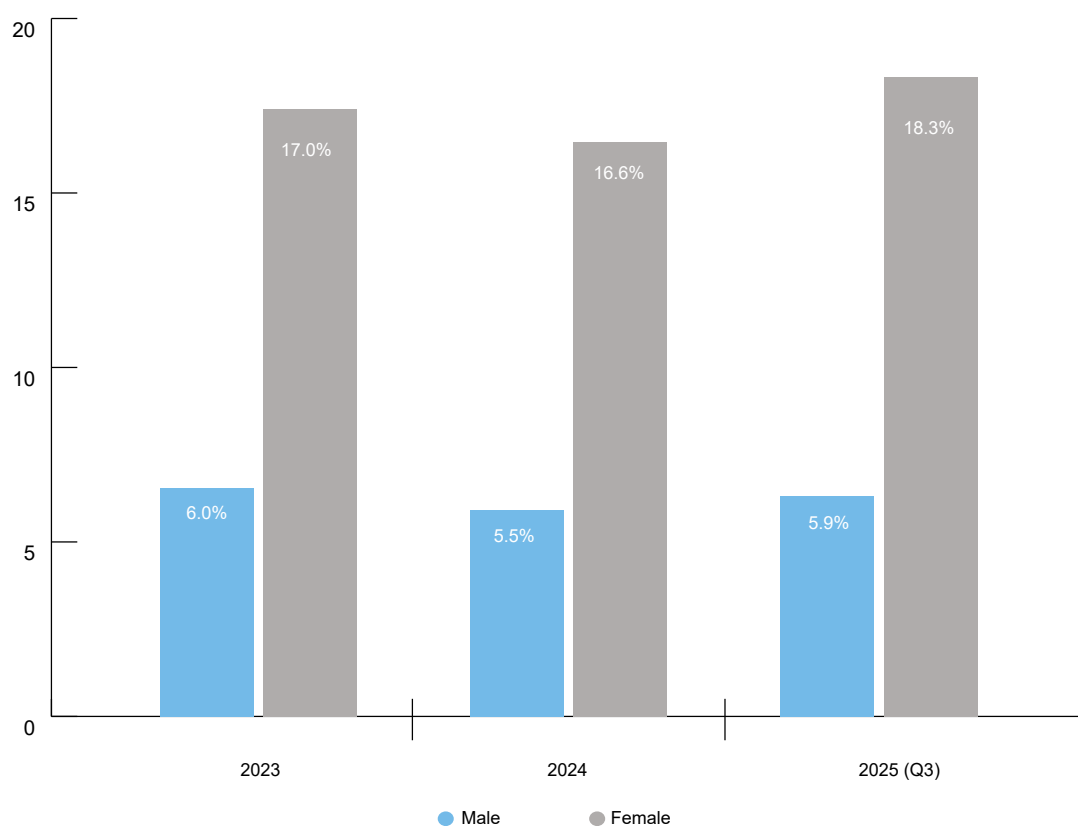


Table 3: Total employed by occupation in 2023, 2024 and 2025 (Q3)²⁵

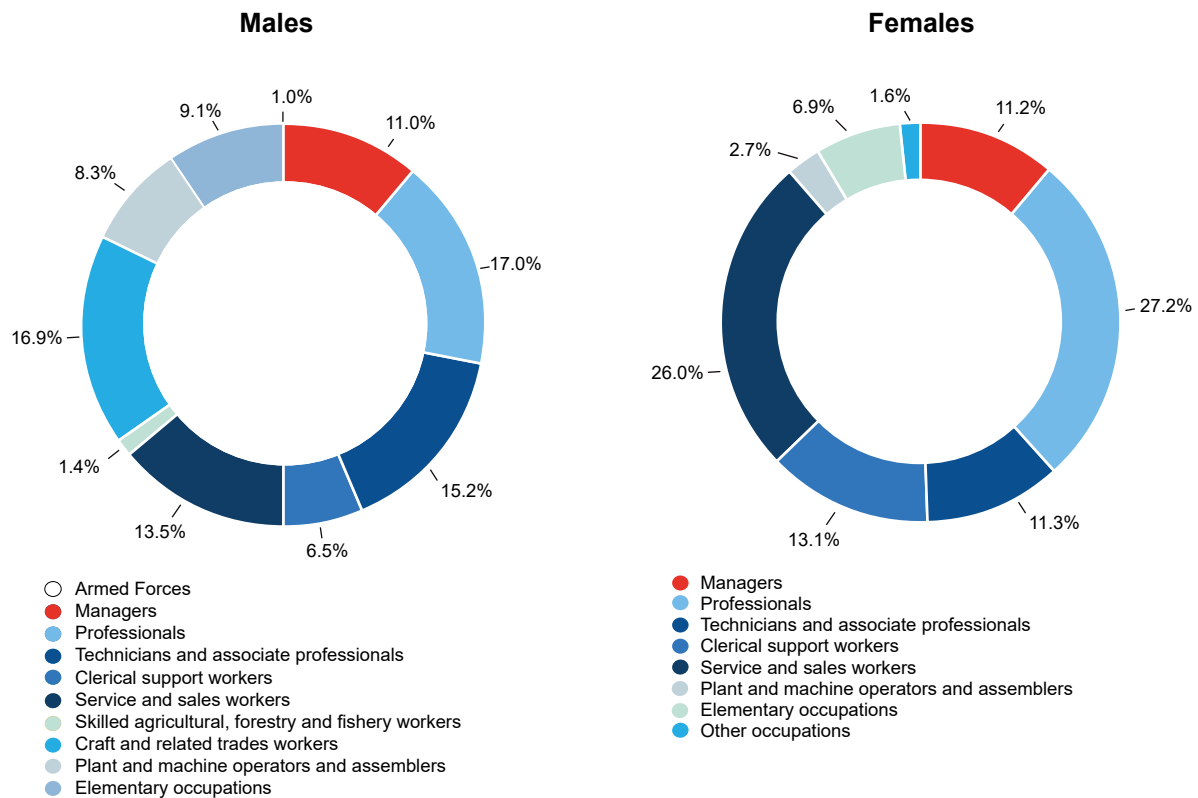
Occupation	2023		2024		2025 (Q3)	
	M %	F %	M %	F %	M %	F %
Armed forces	1.2	:	1.1	:	1.0u	:
Managers	12.9	10.0	11.9	10.1	11.0	11.2
Professionals	16.7	24.5	18.1	26.3	17.0	27.2
Technicians and associate professionals	13.2	11.5	13.8	11.9	15.2	11.3
Clerical support workers	7.3	15.6	6.9	13.5	6.5	13.1
Service and sales workers	13.8	27.0	13.3	26.7	13.5	26.0
Skilled agricultural, forestry and fishery workers	2.1	:	1.3	:	1.4u	:
Craft and related trades workers	17.1	1.5	16.5	1.5	16.9	:
Plant and machine operators and assemblers	7.8	2.5	8.0	2.4	8.3	2.7u
Elementary occupations	7.9	6.9	9.0	7.2	9.1	6.9

: Unreliable - less than 20 sample observations

u Underrepresented - between 20 and 49 sample observations

²⁴ National Statistics Office (NSO), December 2025, Labour Force Survey: Q3/2025 and correspondence with the National Statistics Office (NSO), 05/02/2026

²⁵ Ibid.

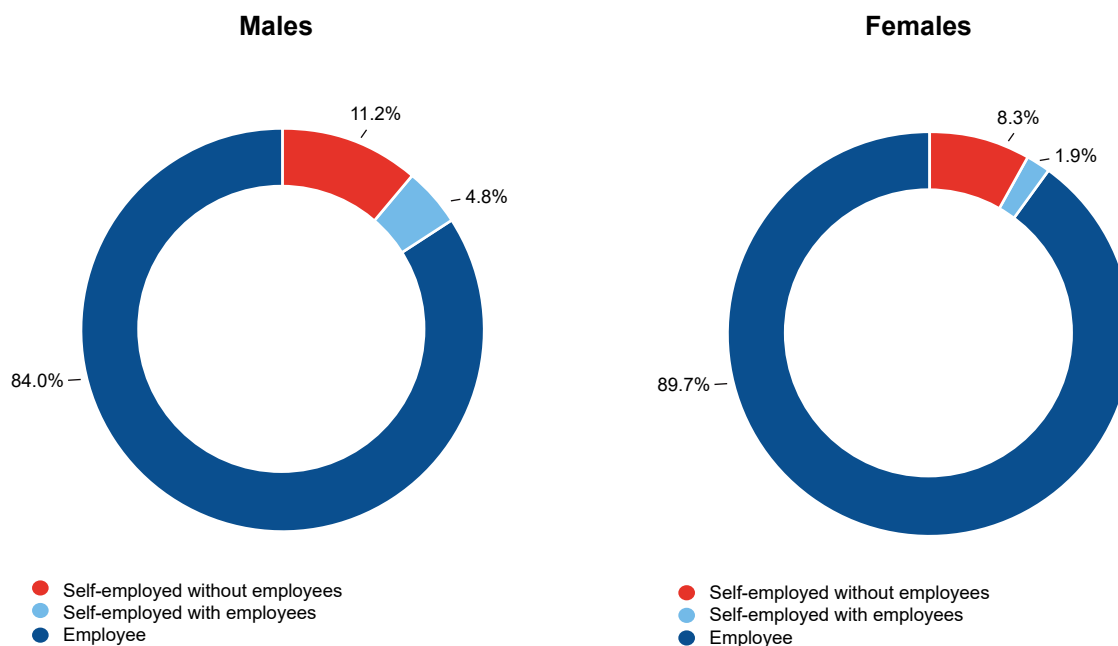
Figures 4 & 5: Total employed by occupation in 2025 (Q3)²⁶**Table 4: Total employed by professional status in 2023, 2024 and 2025 (Q3)²⁷**

Professional status	2023		2024		2025 (Q3)	
	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females
Self-employed without employees	14.1	8.3	11.4	8.2	11.2	8.3
Self-employed with employees	6.5	1.8	5.4	1.5	4.8	1.9u
Employee	79.4	89.9	83.2	90.2	84.0	89.7

u Under represented - between 20 and 49 sample observations

²⁶ National Statistics Office (NSO), December 2025, *Labour Force Survey: Q3/2025*

²⁷ National Statistics Office (NSO), December 2025, *Labour Force Survey: Q3/2025* and correspondence with the National Statistics Office (NSO), 05/02/2026

Figures 6 & 7: Total employed by professional status of women and men in 2025 (Q3)²⁸**Table 5: Unadjusted gender pay gap in 2022, 2023 and 2024²⁹**

	2022	2023	2024
Malta	5.8	5.1(p)	4.9 (p)
EU 27 countries (since 2020)	12.2	11.7(p)	11.1 (p)

p - provisional

28 National Statistics Office (NSO), December 2025, Labour Force Survey: Q3/2025

29 https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/SDG_05_20/default/table?lang=en

Table 6: Unadjusted gender pay gap in Malta by economic activity in 2022, 2023 and 2024³⁰

Economic activity	2022	2023	2024
Industry, construction and services (except activities of households as employers and extra-territorial organisations and bodies)	:	:	:
Industry, construction and services (except public administration, defense, compulsory social security)	5.8	5.1 (p)	4.9 (p)
Business economy	4.4	4.9 (p)	4.5 (p)
Mining and quarrying	-8.9 (u)	-5.1 (u)	-4 (u)
Manufacturing	13.1	14.5 (p)	13.9 (p)
Electricity, gas, steam and air conditioning supply	:	:	:
Water supply; sewerage, waste management and remediation activities	18.4	:	:
Construction	-25.1	-15.2 (p)	-17.2 (p)
Wholesale and retail trade; repair of motor vehicles and motorcycles	4.2	4.5 (p)	4.8 (p)
Transportation and storage	13.2	12.3 (p)	10.6 (p)
Accommodation and food service activities	4.8	6.4 (p)	4.8 (p)
Information and communication	12.1	15.6(p)	18.7 (p)
Financial and insurance activities	14.2	14.9(p)	15.4 (p)
Real estate activities	27.4 (u)	18.5 (u)	17.4 (u)
Professional, scientific and technical activities	7.9	7.2 (p)	7.6 (p)
Administrative and support service activities	3.1	3.1 (p)	2.5 (p)
Public administration and defence; compulsory social security	:	:	:
Education	17.7	17.1 (p)	15.4 (p)
Human health and social work activities	8.1	8.4 (p)	8.8 (p)
Arts, entertainment and recreation	6.3	4 (p)	5.7 (p)
Other service activities	-2.9	-2.3 (p)	2.6 (p)

p - provisional

: - not available

u - low reliability

30 https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/EARN_GR_GPGR2/default/table?lang=en

Table 7: Gender balance in largest listed companies: presidents, board members and employee representatives in 2023, 2024 and 2025³¹

	2023-B2		2024-B2		2025-B2	
	M%	F%	M%	F%	M%	F%
Malta	82.5	17.5	82.9	17.1	82.0	18.0
EU 27 countries (since 2020)	66.1	33.9	65.3	34.7	64.2	35.8

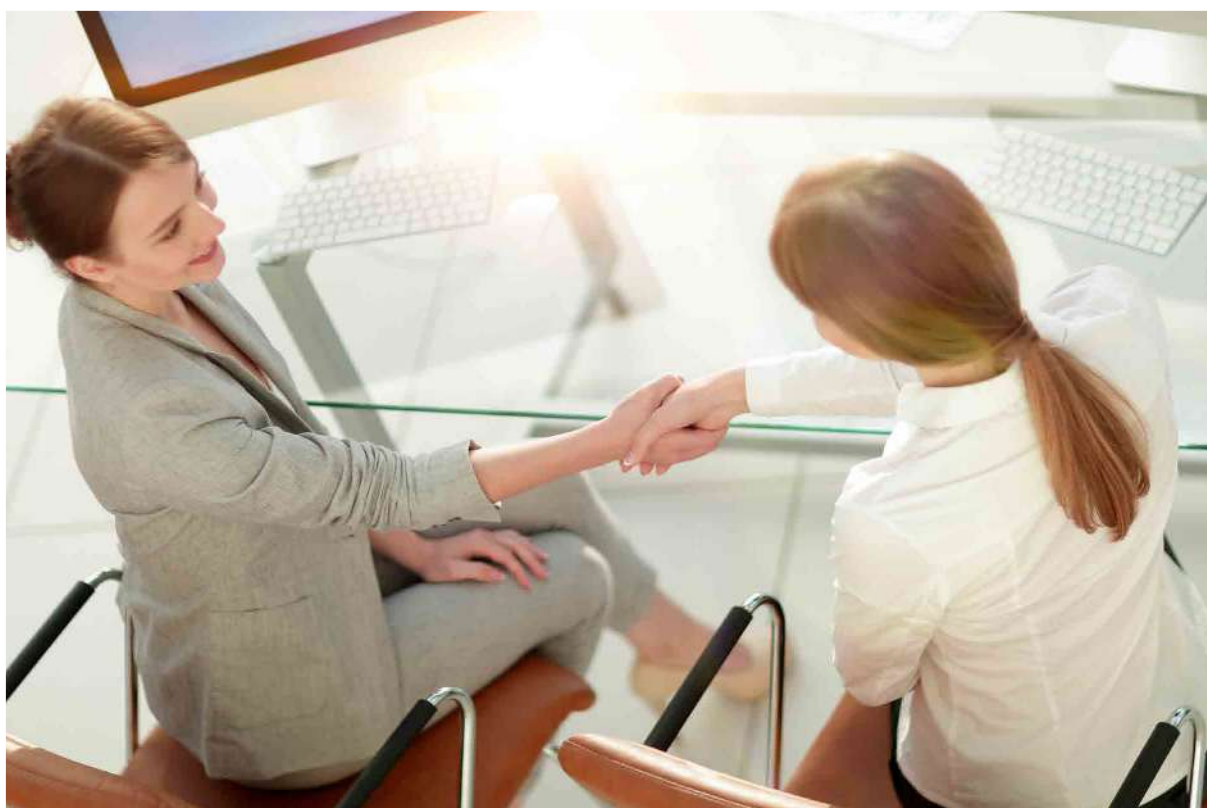
COMMENTS

Women's activity and employment rates have increased markedly in recent years, particularly among those aged 25 to 54.

Despite this progress, the gap in economic inactivity between men and women remains substantial. In Q3 2025, the inactivity rate among men stood at 10.4%, compared with 22.9% among women - more than double the male rate. Similarly, only 5.9% of men were engaged in part-time work as their main occupation, compared with 18.3% of women. These figures clearly point to the persistence of gender inequalities in relation to paid employment.

Gendered patterns in occupational distribution further demonstrate the continued influence of stereotypical roles and representations. Women remain overrepresented in clerical, service, and sales occupations, while being underrepresented in mechanical and technical fields, including craft work, machine operation and assembly, and technician roles.

The gender pay gap in Malta is around 5%, which is below the EU average of 11%. However, the gap remains high in certain sectors, particularly Information and Communication (18.7%), Real Estate Activities (17.4%), Education (15.4%), and Financial and Insurance Activities (15.4%).



31 https://eige.europa.eu/gender-statistics/dgs/indicator/wmidm_bus_bus_wmid_comp_compbm

PUBLIC SERVICE

Table 8: Women and men per salary scales (2024 and 2025)³²

Salary scale	2024					2025					Change in percentage	
	Males		Females		Total	Males		Females		Total	Males	Females
1	5	83.3%	1	16.7%	6	6	85.7%	1	14.3%	7	+	-
2	26	81.3%	6	18.8%	32	28	87.5%	4	12.5%	32	+	-
3	240	78.9%	64	21.1%	304	246	76.4%	76	23.6%	322	-	+
4	569	59.8%	382	40.2%	951	619	57.6%	455	42.4%	1,074	-	+
5	850	47.2%	949	52.8%	1,799	923	46.8%	1,049	53.2%	1,972	-	+
6	931	45.1%	1,134	54.9%	2,065	981	43.9%	1,252	56.1%	2,233	-	+
7	1,886	32.2%	3,977	67.8%	5,863	2,026	31.7%	4,362	68.3%	6,388	-	+
8	719	34.1%	1,389	65.9%	2,108	825	30.0%	1,929	70.0%	2,754	-	+
9	1,426	31.6%	3,089	68.4%	4,515	1,700	36.3%	2,979	63.7%	4,679	+	-
10	1,390	37.2%	2,346	62.8%	3,736	1,356	32.8%	2,775	67.2%	4,131	-	+
11	1,643	61.5%	1,030	38.5%	2,673	1,703	65.0%	919	35.0%	2,622	+	-
12	1,220	48.9%	1,277	51.1%	2,497	1,326	64.1%	743	35.9%	2,069	+	-
13	1,330	65.7%	694	34.3%	2,024	1,428	73.6%	511	26.4%	1,939	+	-
14	925	59.9%	619	40.1%	1,544	992	60.0%	660	40.0%	1,652	+	-
15	1,036	69.3%	458	30.7%	1,494	858	62.4%	517	37.6%	1,375	-	+
16	569	75.1%	189	24.9%	758	443	80.3%	109	19.7%	552	+	-
17	329	47.7%	361	52.3%	690	220	60.8%	142	39.2%	362	+	-
18	157	83.1%	32	16.9%	189	79	76.0%	25	24.0%	104	-	+
19	151	90.4%	16	9.6%	167	60	75.9%	19	24.1%	79	-	+
20	91	79.1%	24	20.9%	115	24	75.0%	8	25.0%	32	-	+
Total	15,493	46.2%	18,037	53.8%	33,530	15,843	46.1%	18,535	53.9%	34,378	-	+

³² Correspondence with the People and Standards Division (P&SD), 05/02/2026

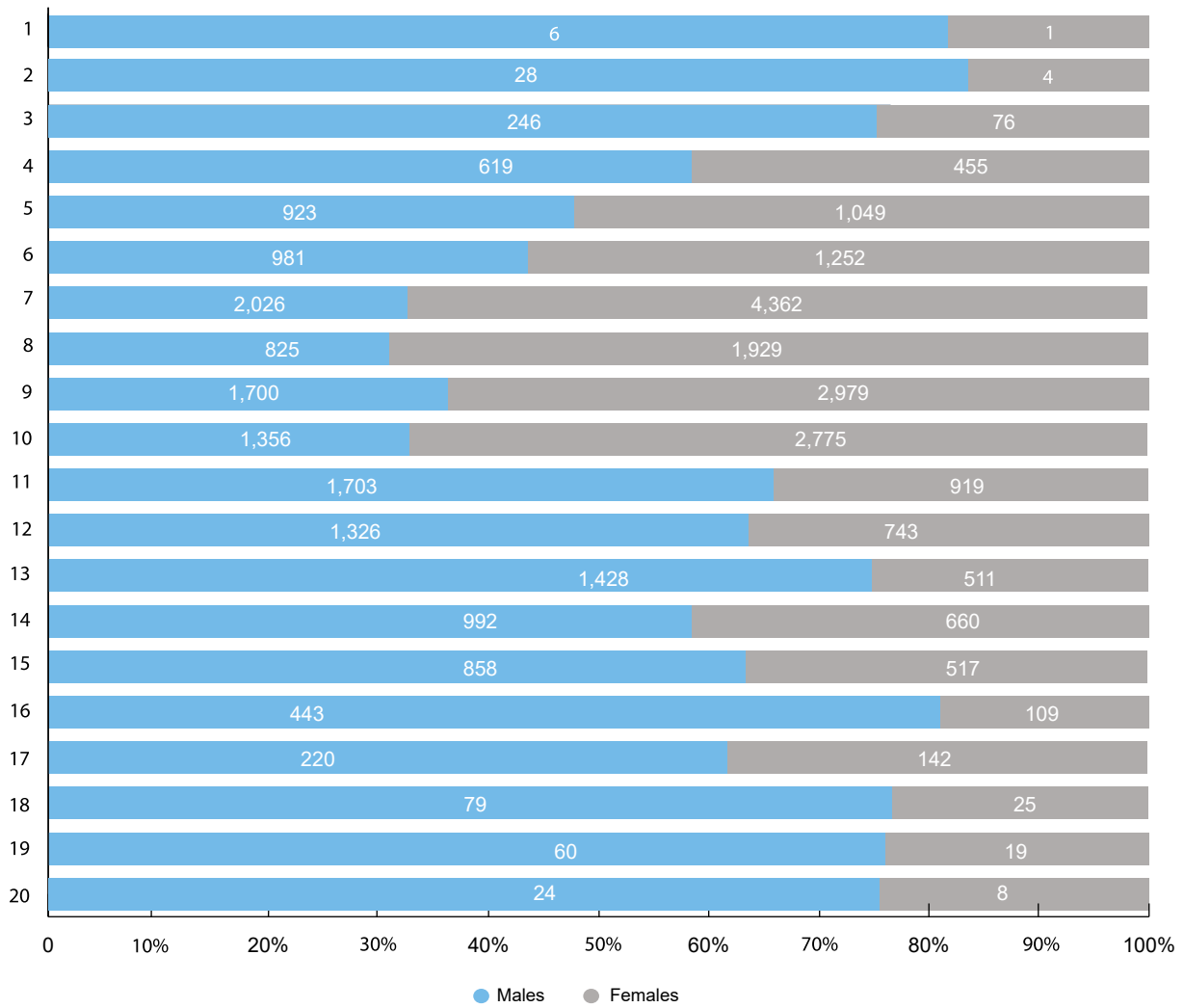
Figure 8: Women and men per salary scales (2025) ³³³³ Ibid.

Table 9: Utilisation of family-friendly measures by gender in 2023 and 2024³⁴

Type	2023					2024				
	Males		Females		Total	Males		Females		Total
	No	%	No	%		No	%	No	%	
Maternity Leave (first 14 weeks)	0	0.0	719	100.0	719	0	0.0	667	100.0	667
Maternity Leave (additional 4 weeks)	0	0.0	613	100.0	613	0	0.0	580	100.0	580
Adoption Leave	3	18.8	13	81.3	16	0	0.0	2	100.0	2
Responsibility Leave	4	10.5	34	89.5	38	5	14.7	29	85.3	34
Parental Leave Applicable to Parents, Legal Guardians and Foster Carers	11	1.9	564	98.1	575	17	4.0	407	96.0	424
Carers' Leave	22	24.7	67	75.3	89	14	23.3	46	76.7	60
Career Break	5	2.8	174	97.2	179	4	2.9	132	97.1	136
Leave to accompany spouse / partner in Civil Union on Govt-sponsored courses or assignments	0	0.0	8	100.0	8	0	0.0	4	100.0	4
Reduced hours – 20 hours/week	14	4.6	292	95.4	306	18	6.0	282	94.0	300
Reduced hours – 25 hours/week	5	4.5	105	95.5	110	6	5.7	99	94.3	105
Reduced hours – 30 hours/week	25	6.6	351	93.4	376	28	8.7	294	91.3	322
Reduced hours – 35 hours/week	11	5.9	174	94.1	185	7	4.0	169	96.0	176
Reduced hours – other amounts	25	5.3	451	94.7	476	32	8.0	366	92.0	398
Flexi-Time	820	46.8	933	53.2	1,753	862	44.9	1,058	55.1	1,920
Flexi-Week	106	39.8	160	60.2	266	110	43.1	145	56.9	255
Remote Working	587	40.7	855	59.3	1,442	644	39.6	983	60.4	1,627
Extended Remote Working	445	26.4	1,240	73.6	1,685	465	26.1	1,319	73.9	1,784
Total	2,083	23.6	6,753	76.4	8,836	2,212	25.2	6,582	74.8	8,794

34 Correspondence with the People and Standards Division (P&SD), 26/01/2026

Table 10: Utilisation of family-friendly measures by different Scale Categories in 2024³⁵

Type	Scales 1-5		Scales 6-10		Scales 11-15		Scales 16-20		Definite Contracts	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
Maternity Leave (first 14 weeks)	0	36	0	513	0	101	0	5	0	12
Maternity Leave (additional 4 weeks)	0	34	0	442	0	90	0	4	0	10
Adoption Leave	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0
Responsibility Leave	1	0	2	18	2	8	0	3	0	0
Parental Leave Applicable to Parents, Legal Guardians and Foster Carers	7	37	5	320	1	40	2	2	2	8
Carers' Leave	3	3	10	36	1	7	0	0	0	0
Career Break	1	2	1	111	1	17	0	0	1	2
Leave to accompany spouse / partner in Civil Union on Govt-sponsored courses or assignments	0	0	0	4	0	0	0	0	0	0
Reduced hours – 20 hours/week	2	23	11	215	33	1	0	9	4	2
Reduced hours – 25 hours/week	0	8	2	59	2	23	1	8	1	1
Reduced hours – 30 hours/week	0	27	16	190	4	57	5	19	3	1
Reduced hours – 35 hours/week	1	11	4	98	0	43	2	16	0	1
Reduced hours – other amounts	1	30	22	286	2	36	1	10	6	4
Flexi-Time	136	85	470	621	210	286	32	51	14	15
Flexi-Week	21	19	53	78	29	29	4	10	3	9
Remote Working	119	140	412	631	94	189	11	15	8	8
Extended Remote Working	97	171	272	797	73	318	18	23	5	10
Totals	389	626	1,280	4,421	452	1,245	76	175	47	83
Overall percentage	38.3%	61.7%	22.5%	77.5%	26.6%	73.4%	30.3%	69.7%	36.2%	63.8%

COMMENTS

In recent years, the proportion of women in Scales 2 to 4 has risen; however, men continue to be markedly overrepresented at these levels. Conversely, women are disproportionately represented in Scales 6 to 10.

Within public administration, men make considerably less use of family-friendly arrangements than women. Only a small number of men choose reduced working hours or take career breaks and parental leave, although a larger share make use of remote working and flexible hours.

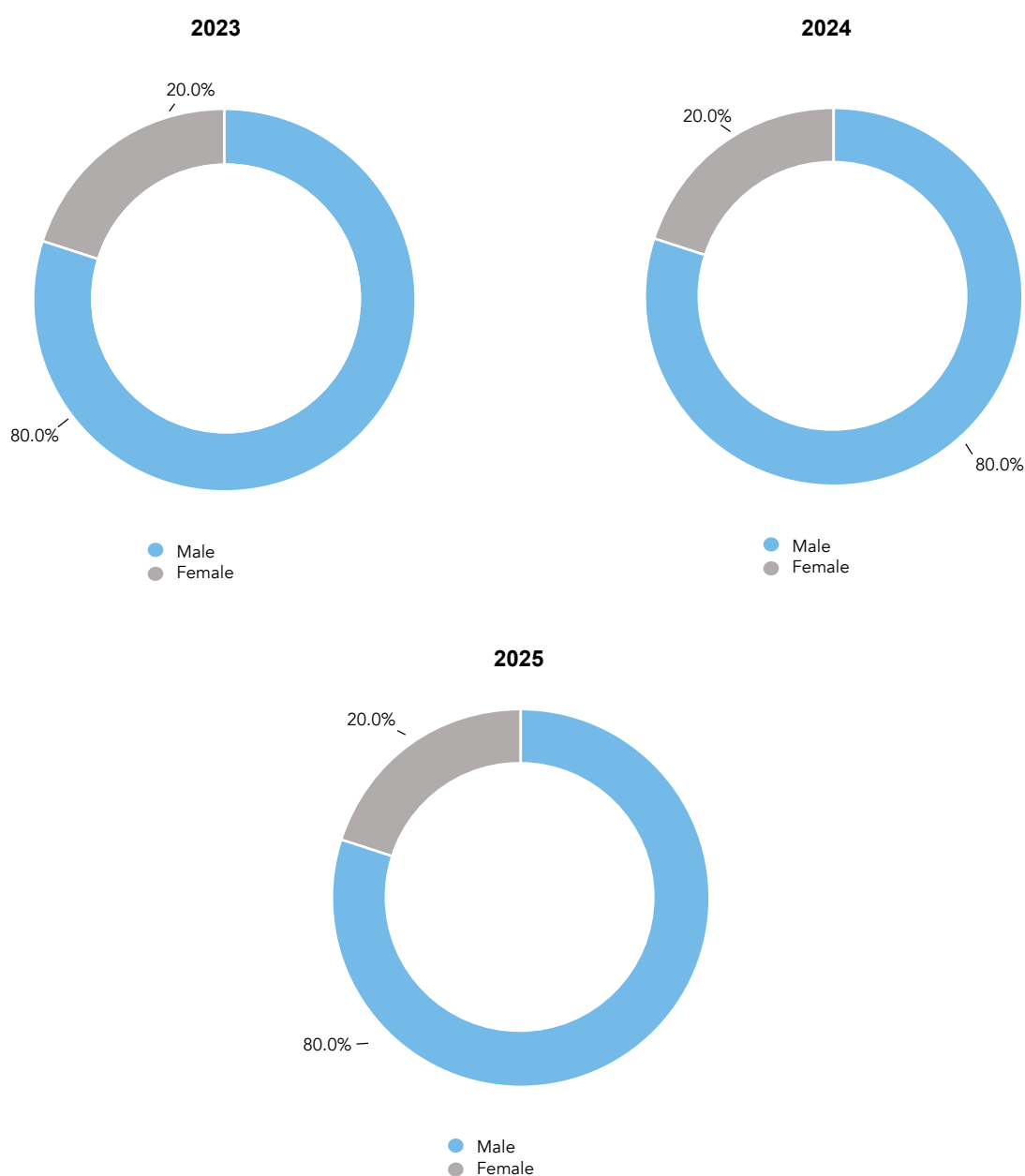
³⁵ Ibid.

POLITICAL SPHERE – NATIONAL GOVERNMENT

Table 11: Cabinet as at end of 2023, 2024 and 2025³⁶

	2023					2024					2025				
	Males		Females		Total	Males		Females		Total	Males		Females		Total
Ministers	17	89.5%	2	10.5%	19	15	88.2%	2	11.8%	17	15	88.2%	2	11.8%	17
Parliamentary Secretaries	3	50.0%	3	50.0%	6	5	62.5%	3	37.5%	8	5	62.5%	3	37.5%	8
Cabinet - Total	20	80.0%	5	20.0%	25	20	80.0%	5	20.0%	25	20	80.0%	5	20.0%	25

Figures 9, 10 & 11: Cabinet as at end of 2023, 2024 and 2025 by percentage³⁷

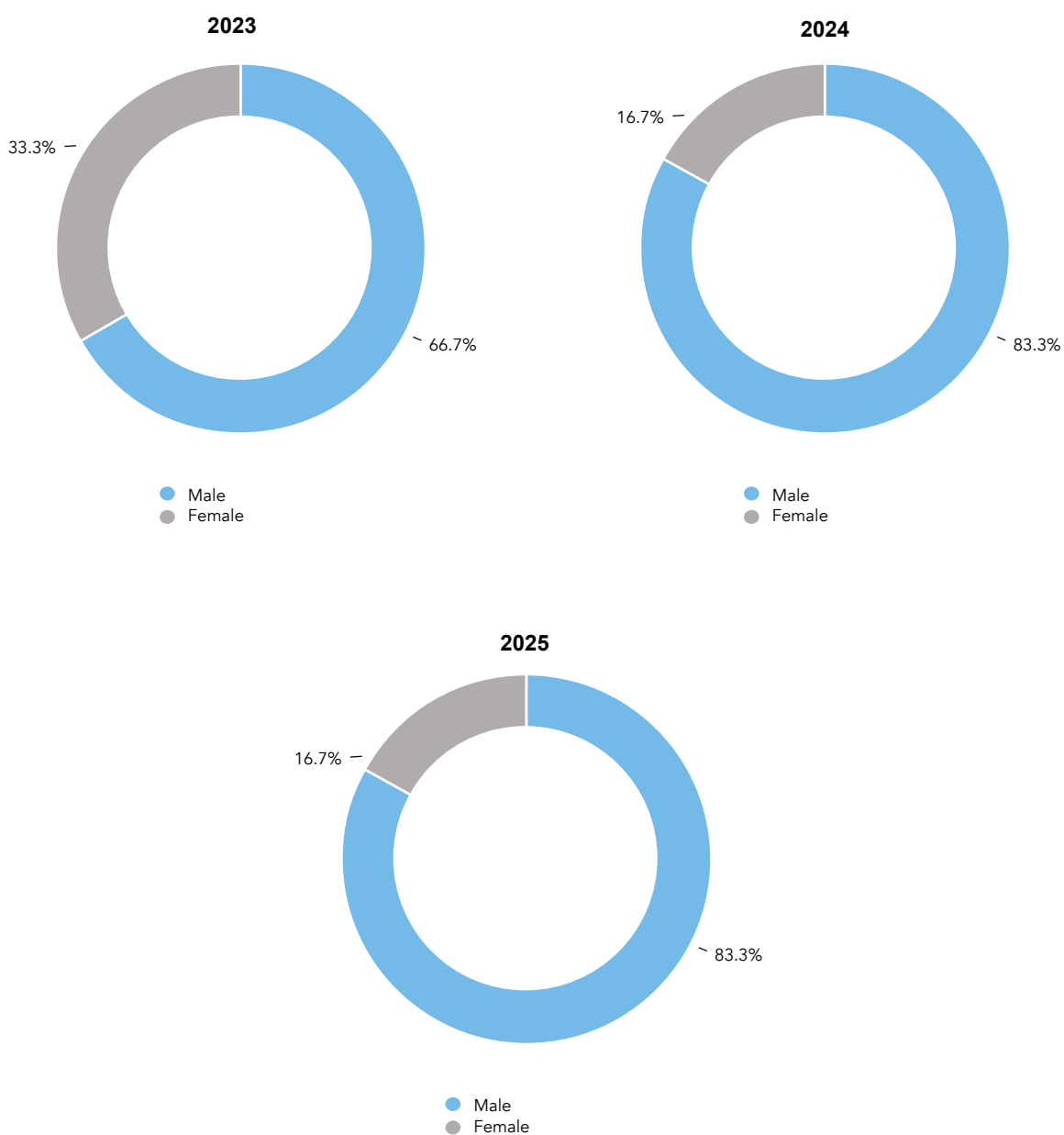


³⁶ <https://primeminister.gov.mt/cabinet/>

³⁷ Ibid.

Table 12: Maltese MEPs as at end of 2023, 2024 and 2025³⁸

	2023		2024		2025	
Males	4	66.7%	5	83.3%	5	83.3%
Females	2	33.3%	1	16.7%	1	16.7%
Total	6	100.0%	6	100.0%	6	100.0%

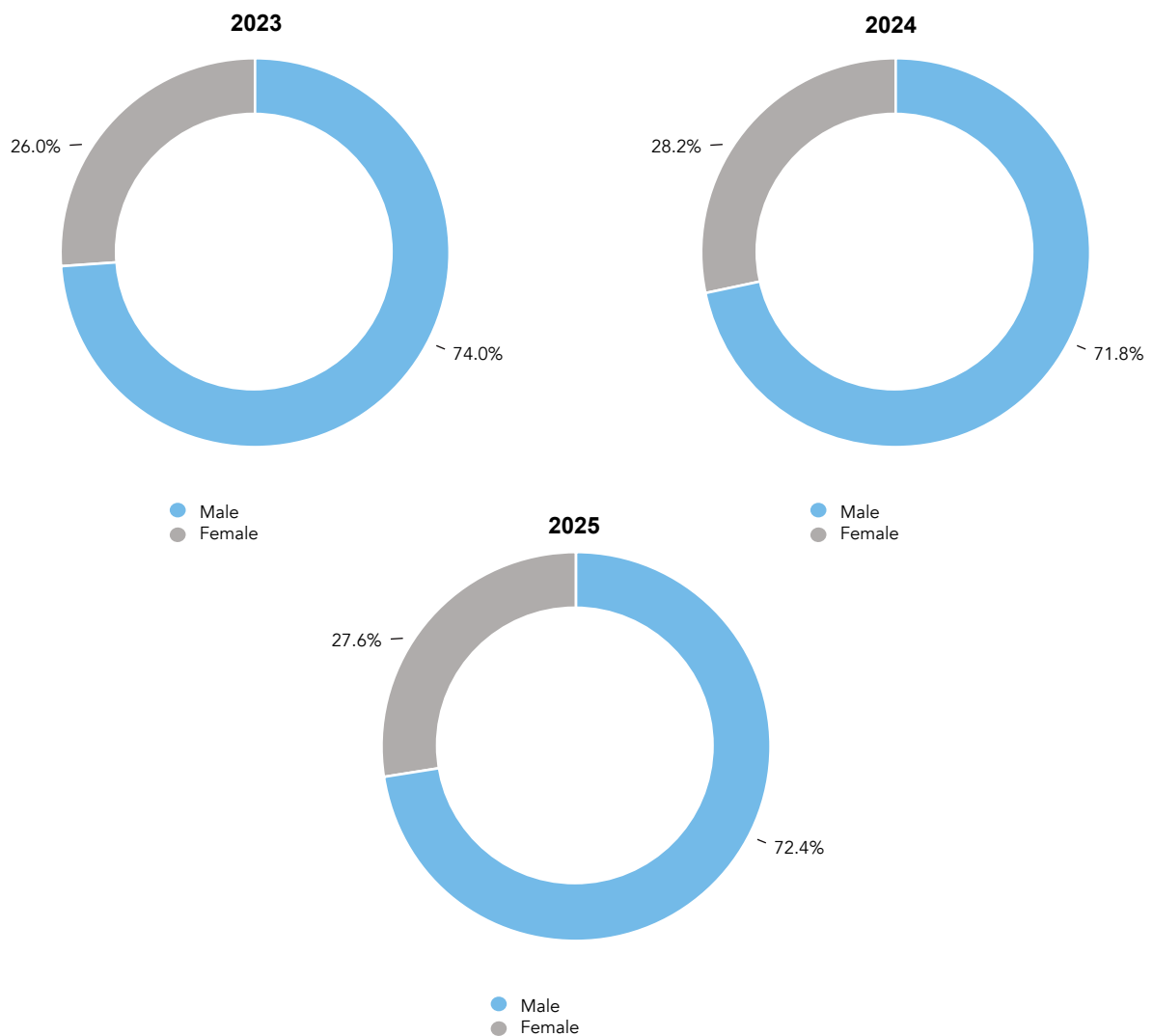
Figures 12, 13 & 14: Maltese MEPs as at end of 2023, 2024 and 2025 by percentage³⁹

38 <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/meps/en/search/advanced?countryCode=MT>

39 Ibid.

Table 13: Local Councils as at end of 2023, 2024 and 2025⁴⁰

	2023					2024					2025				
	Males		Females		Total	Males		Females		Total	Males		Females		Total
Mayors	57	83.8%	11	16.2%	68	61	89.7%	7	10.3%	68	61	89.7%	7	10.3%	68
Deputy Mayors	44	64.7%	24	35.3%	68	52	76.5%	16	23.5%	68	52	76.5%	16	23.5%	68
Councillors	240	73.8%	85	26.2%	325	229	67.4%	111	32.6%	340	231	68.1%	108	31.9%	339
Total	341	74.0%	120	26.0%	461	342	71.8%	134	28.2%	476	344	72.4%	131	27.6%	475

Figures 15, 16 & 17: Mayors, Deputy Mayors and Councillors as at end of 2023, 2024 and 2025 by percentage⁴¹

⁴⁰ Correspondence with the Local Government Division, 06/01/2026

⁴¹ Ibid.

COMMENTS

Gender disparities in Cabinet persist, with women occupying only 20% of positions over the past three years, reflecting a lack of progress towards gender balance. The number of female Ministers remains particularly low compared to their male counterparts, with the current composition standing at 15 male Ministers and just two female Ministers. Among Parliamentary Secretaries, five are men and three are women.

In 2025, 29% of Members of Parliament were women, while 71% were men.

In relation to MEPs, female representation has declined over time, from 33.3% in 2023 to 16.7% in both 2024 and 2025.

Although female representation in local council positions showed a slight improvement between 2023 and 2024, this was followed by a decline in 2025, pointing to stagnation rather than sustained progress towards gender balance. Overall, men continue to dominate local council roles, with a persistent gender gap evident across mayoral, deputy mayoral, and councillor positions.

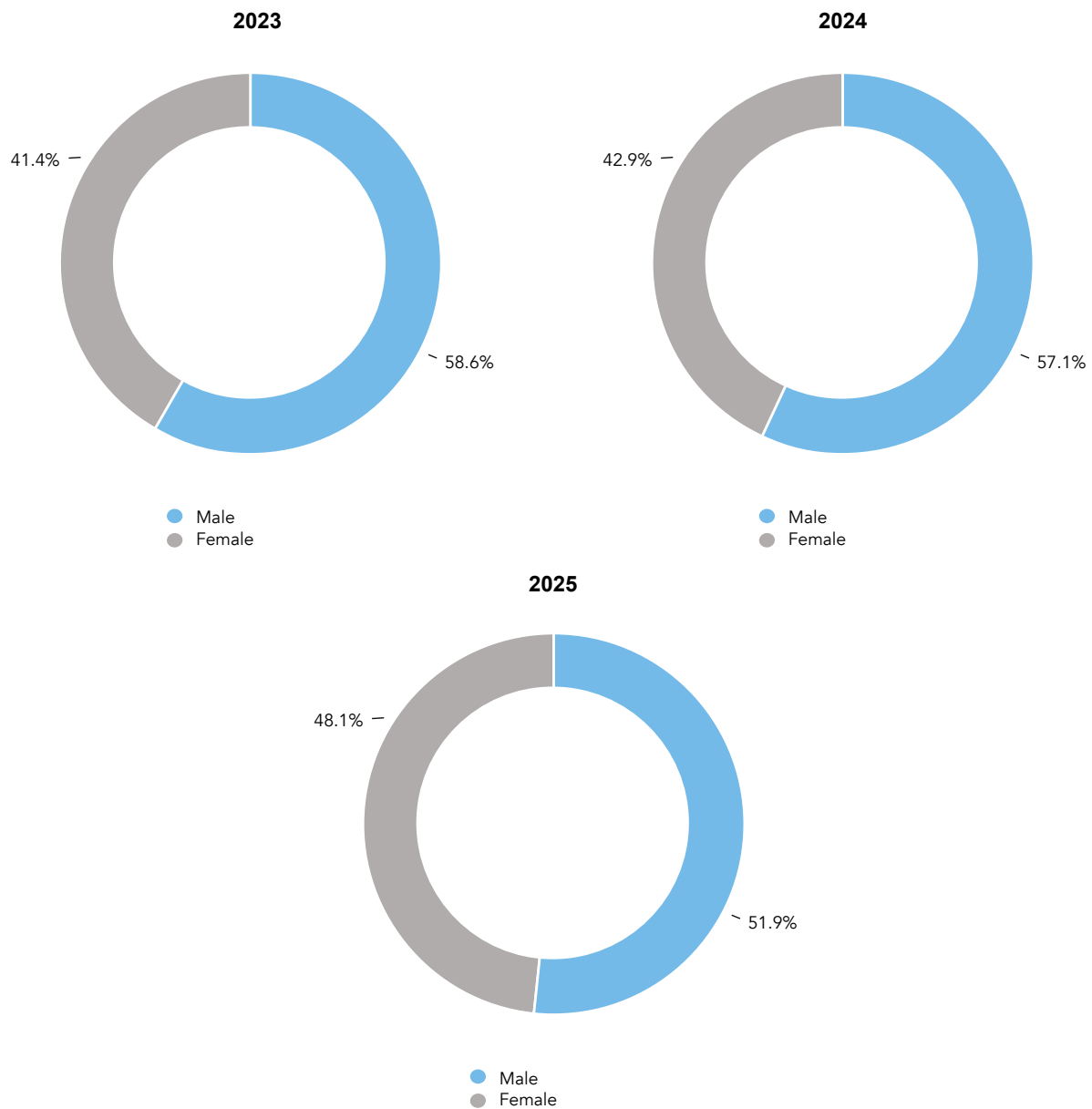
JUDICIARY

Table 14: Bench of Judges as at end of 2023, 2024 and 2025⁴²

	2023		2024		2025	
Males	17	58.6%	16	57.1%	14	51.9%
Females	12	41.4%	12	42.9%	13	48.1%
Total	29	100.0%	28	100.0%	27	100.0%

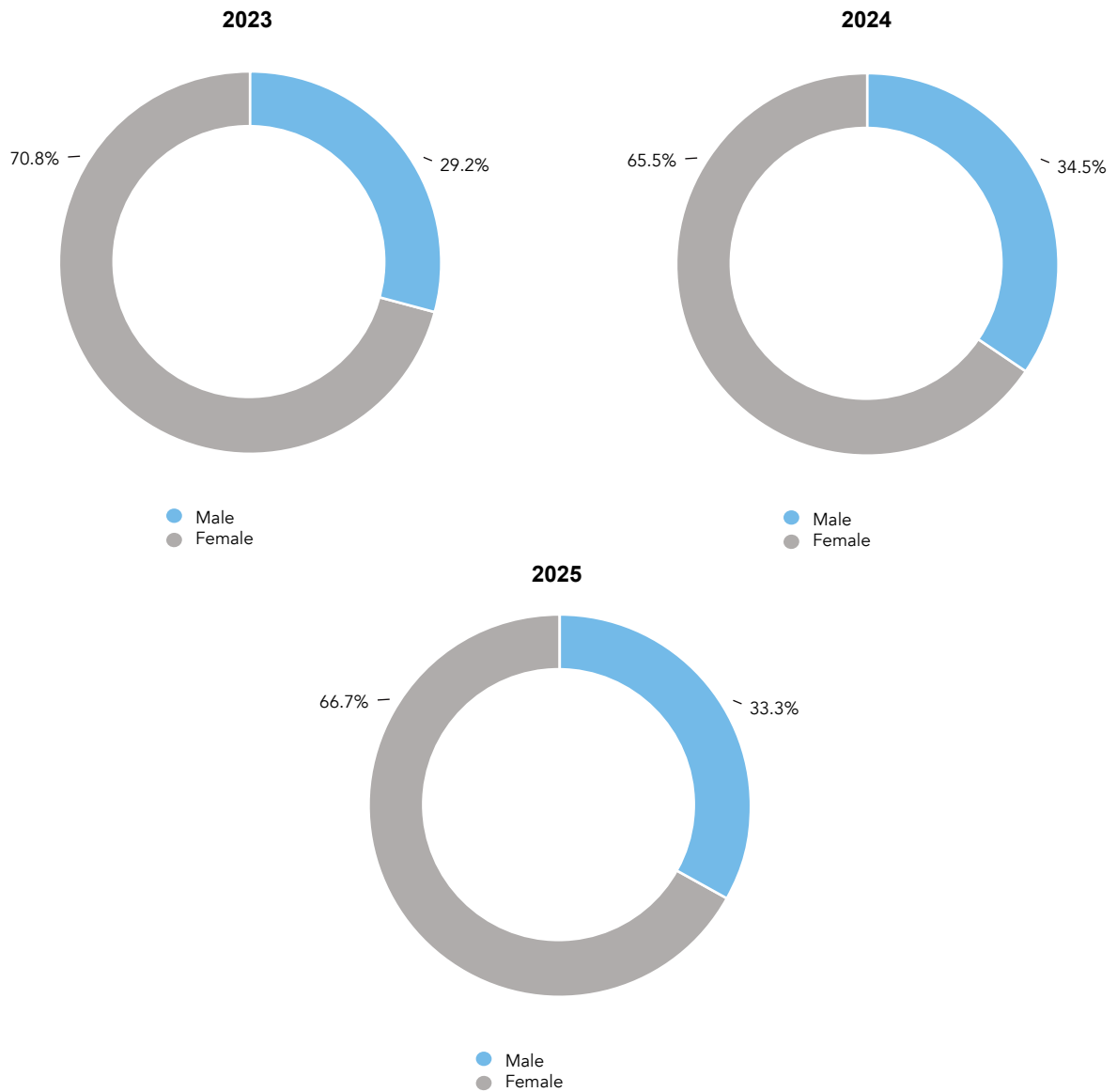


⁴² Correspondence with the Courts Services Agency, 05/01/2026

Figures 18, 19 & 20: Bench of Judges as at end of 2023, 2024 and 2025 by percentage⁴³**Table 15: Bench of Magistrates as at end of 2023, 2024 and 2025**⁴⁴

	2023		2024		2025	
Males	7	29.2%	10	34.5%	10	33.3%
Females	17	70.8%	19	65.5%	20	66.7%
Total	24	100.0%	29	100.0%	30	100.0%

⁴³ Ibid.⁴⁴ Ibid.

Figures 21, 22 & 23: Bench of Magistrates as at end of 2023, 2024 and 2025 by percentage⁴⁵**COMMENTS**

Over the past three years, the bench of magistrates has been predominantly female. While women were underrepresented among judges in 2023 and 2024, the gender gap narrowed considerably by 2025, resulting in a more balanced representation compared to previous years.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

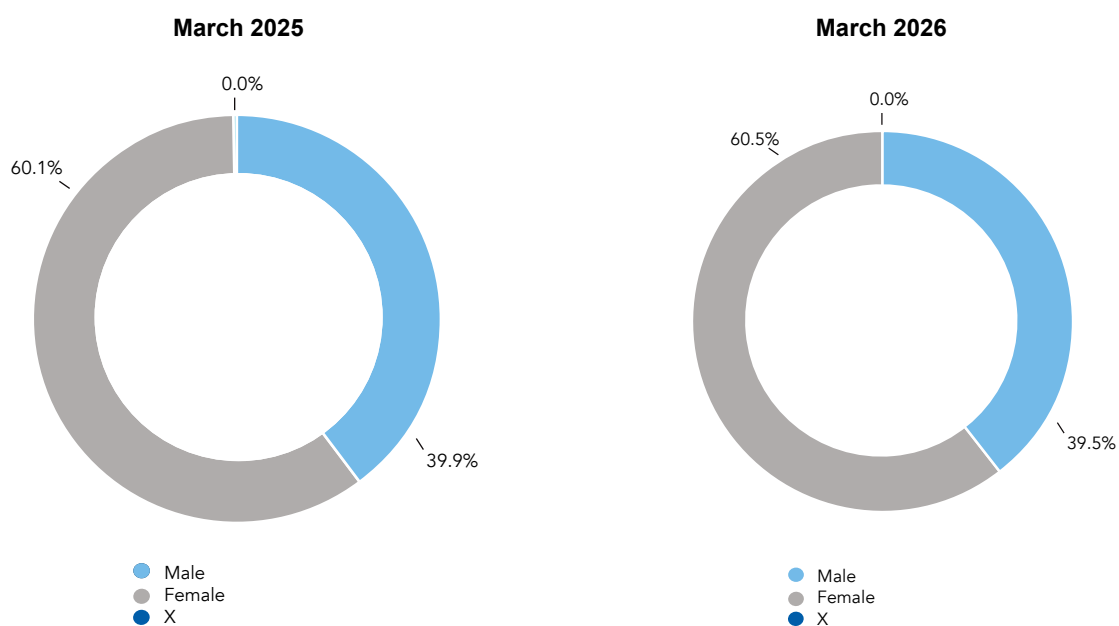
EDUCATION

Table 16: University Postgraduates in Mar 2025 and Mar 2026 by faculty/institute⁴⁶

Faculty/Institute	Postgraduates - March 2025							Postgraduates - March 2026							Change in Percentage	
	M		F		X		Total	M		F		X		Total	M	F
Faculty of Arts	33	45.2%	40	54.8%	0	0.0%	73	44	40.7%	64	59.3%	0	0.0%	108	-	+
Faculty for the Built Environment	37	59.7%	25	40.3%	0	0.0%	62	30	55.6%	24	44.4%	0	0.0%	54	-	+
Faculty of Economics, Management and Accountancy	118	47.6%	130	52.4%	0	0.0%	248	99	44.4%	124	55.6%	0	0.0%	223	-	+
Faculty of Education	55	24.0%	174	76.0%	0	0.0%	229	49	24.6%	150	75.4%	0	0.0%	199	+	-
Faculty of Engineering	20	74.1%	7	25.9%	0	0.0%	27	30	81.1%	7	18.9%	0	0.0%	37	+	-
Faculty of Health Sciences	19	24.4%	59	75.6%	0	0.0%	78	32	25.4%	94	74.6%	0	0.0%	126	+	-
Faculty of Information and Communication Technology	38	67.9%	18	32.1%	0	0.0%	56	61	74.4%	21	25.6%	0	0.0%	82	+	-
Faculty of Laws	59	32.6%	122	67.4%	0	0.0%	181	66	38.2%	107	61.8%	0	0.0%	173	+	-
Faculty of Medicine and Surgery	77	36.3%	135	63.7%	0	0.0%	212	97	40.6%	142	59.4%	0	0.0%	239	+	-
Faculty of Science	11	44.0%	14	56.0%	0	0.0%	25	12	50.0%	12	50.0%	0	0.0%	24	+	-
Faculty for Social Wellbeing	17	21.0%	64	79.0%	0	0.0%	81	21	21.2%	78	78.8%	0	0.0%	99	+	-
Institute of Digital Games	14	77.8%	4	22.2%	0	0.0%	18	13	92.9%	1	7.1%	0	0.0%	14	+	-
Centre for Entrepreneurship and Business Incubation	9	45.0%	11	55.0%	0	0.0%	20	10	58.8%	7	41.2%	0	0.0%	17	+	-
Centre for Labour Studies	0	/	0	/	0	/	0	0	/	0	/	0	/	0	/	/
Others	102	47.0%	115	53.0%	0	0.0%	217	78	34.1%	151	65.9%	0	0.0%	229	-	+
Total	609	39.9%	918	60.1%	0	0.0%	1,527	642	39.5%	982	60.5%	0	0.0%	1,624	-	+

* Final classifications of awards are still being published

⁴⁶ Correspondence with the University of Malta, 26/02/2026

Figures 24 & 25: University Postgraduates in Mar 2025 & Mar 2026 by percentage⁴⁷

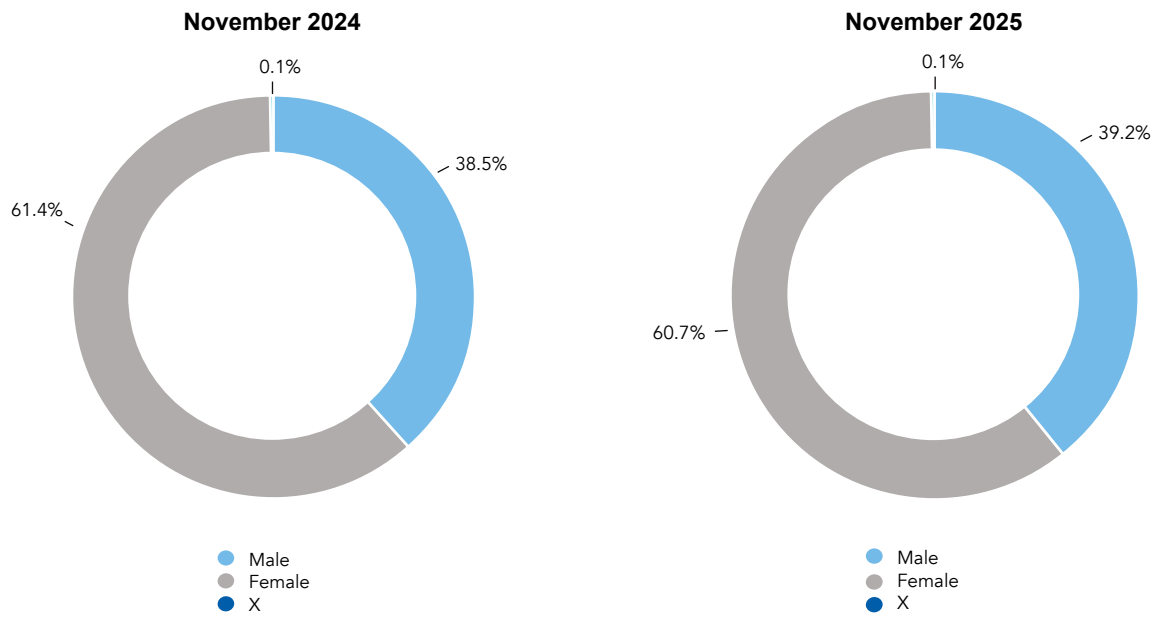
⁴⁷ Ibid.

Table 17: University Undergraduates in Nov 2024 and Nov 2025 by faculty/institute⁴⁸

Faculty/Institute	Undergraduates - November 2024							Undergraduates - November 2025							Change in Percentage	
	M		F		X		Total	M		F		X		Total	M	F
Faculty of Arts	59	27.6%	155	72.4%	0	0.0%	214	70	27.1%	188	72.9%	0	0.0%	258	-	+
Faculty for the Built Environment	76	53.9%	65	46.1%	0	0.0%	141	86	54.1%	73	45.9%	0	0.0%	159	+	-
Faculty of Economics, Management and Accountancy	111	45.5%	133	54.5%	0	0.0%	244	128	50.0%	128	50.0%	0	0.0%	256	+	-
Faculty of Education	4	6.9%	54	93.1%	0	0.0%	58	8	9.8%	74	90.2%	0	0.0%	82	+	-
Faculty of Engineering	61	81.3%	14	18.7%	0	0.0%	75	74	76.3%	23	23.7%	0	0.0%	97	-	+
Faculty of Health Sciences	56	23.9%	178	76.1%	0	0.0%	234	47	22.3%	164	77.7%	0	0.0%	211	-	+
Faculty of Information and Communication Technology	72	83.7%	14	16.3%	0	0.0%	86	74	85.1%	13	14.9%	0	0.0%	87	+	-
Faculty of Laws	57	35.2%	105	64.8%	0	0.0%	162	43	25.1%	127	74.3%	1	0.6%	171	-	+
Faculty of Medicine and Surgery	15	28.3%	38	71.7%	0	0.0%	53	12	27.3%	32	72.7%	0	0.0%	44	-	+
Faculty of Science	30	41.7%	42	58.3%	0	0.0%	72	42	56.0%	33	44.0%	0	0.0%	75	+	-
Faculty for Social Wellbeing	63	26.8%	172	73.2%	0	0.0%	235	71	26.1%	201	73.9%	0	0.0%	272	-	+
Institute of Digital Games	0	/	0	/	0	/	0	0	/	0	/	0	/	0	/	/
Centre for Entrepreneurship and Business Incubation	0	/	0	/	0	/	0	0	/	0	/	0	/	0	/	/
Centre for Labour Studies	4	36.4%	7	63.6%	0	0.0%	11	21	56.8%	16	43.2%	0	0.0%	37	+	-
Others	116	39.5%	177	60.2%	1	0.3%	294	121	42.6%	162	57.0%	1	0.4%	284	+	-
Total	724	38.5%	1,154	61.4%	1	0.1%	1,879	797	39.2%	1,234	60.7%	2	0.1%	2,033	+	-

* Final classifications of awards are still being published

⁴⁸ Ibid.

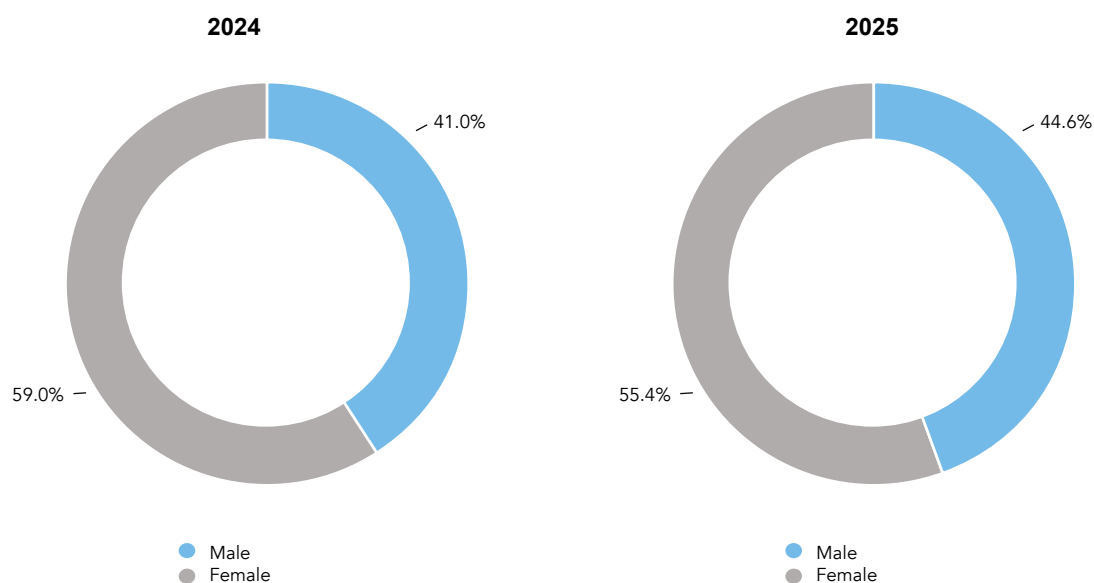
Figures 26 & 27: University Undergraduates in Nov 2024 & Nov 2025 by percentage⁴⁹

⁴⁹ Ibid.

Table 18: MCAST Graduates in 2024 and 2025⁵⁰

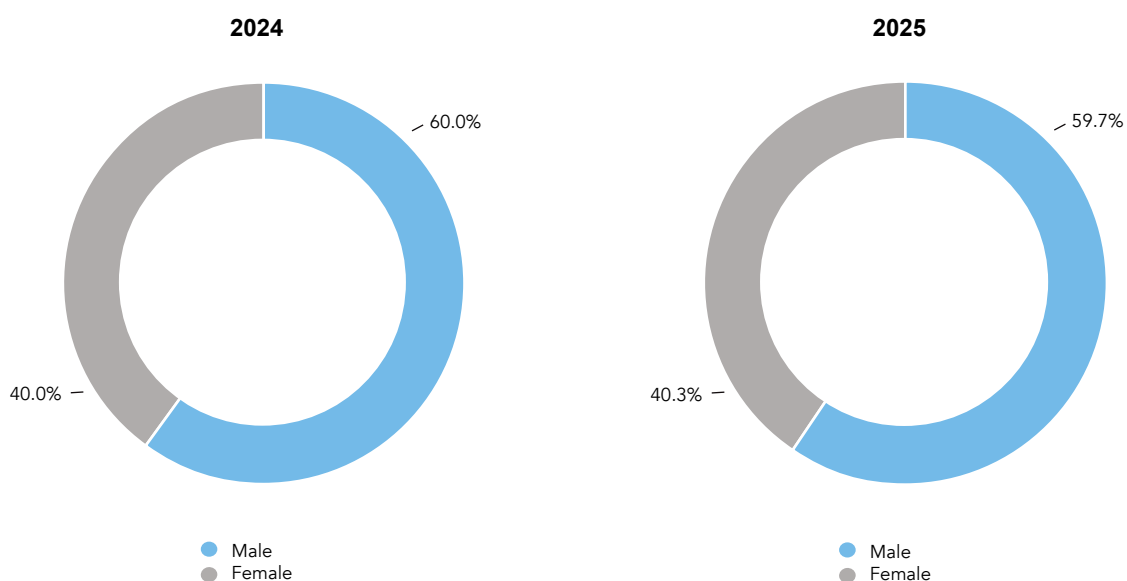
	2024					2025					Change in Percentage	
Level 7	M		F		Total	M		F		Total	M	F
Institute for the Creative Arts	0	/	0	/	0	0	/	0	/	0	/	/
Institute of Applied Sciences	0	/	0	/	0	3	75.0%	1	25.0%	4	/	/
Institute of Business Management and Commerce	24	88.9%	3	11.1%	27	15	75.0%	5	25.0%	20	-	+
Institute of Community Services	7	58.3%	5	41.7%	12	12	60.0%	8	40.0%	20	+	-
Institute of Engineering And Transport	0	/	0	/	0	0	/	0	/	0	/	/
Institute of Information and Communication Technology	0	/	0	/	0	5	100.0%	0	0.0%	5	/	/
Centre for Professional Development	0	/	0	/	0	0	/	0	/	0	/	/
Applied Research and Innovation Centre	13	46.4%	15	53.6%	28	9	37.5%	15	62.5%	24	-	+
Total	44	65.7%	23	34.3%	67	44	60.3%	29	39.7%	73	-	+
Level 6												
Gozo Campus	3	20.0%	12	80.0%	15	0	0.0%	8	100.0%	8	-	+
Institute for the Creative Arts	42	44.7%	52	55.3%	94	36	38.3%	58	61.7%	94	-	+
Institute of Applied Sciences	69	17.6%	323	82.4%	392	52	17.2%	251	82.8%	303	-	+
Institute of Business Management and Commerce	34	37.0%	58	63.0%	92	48	55.8%	38	44.2%	86	+	-
Institute of Community Services	35	35.0%	65	65.0%	100	32	25.2%	95	74.8%	127	-	+
Institute of Engineering And Transport	53	89.8%	6	10.2%	59	41	80.4%	10	19.6%	51	-	+
Institute of Information and Communication Technology	83	80.6%	20	19.4%	103	63	84.0%	12	16.0%	75	+	-
Total	319	37.3%	536	62.7%	855	272	36.6%	472	63.4%	744	-	+
Level 5												
Gozo Campus	0	/	0	/	0	0	/	0	/	0	/	/
Institute for the Creative Arts	6	85.7%	1	14.3%	7	4	57.1%	3	42.9%	7	-	+
Institute of Applied Sciences	0	0.0%	2	100.0%	2	10	29.4%	24	70.6%	34	+	-
Institute of Business Management and Commerce	17	94.4%	1	5.6%	18	40	80.0%	10	20.0%	50	-	+
Institute of Community Services	6	14.0%	37	86.0%	43	11	42.3%	15	57.7%	26	+	-
Institute of Engineering And Transport	24	82.8%	5	17.2%	29	64	87.7%	9	12.3%	73	+	-
Institute of Information and Communication Technology	4	100.0%	0	0.0%	4	7	100.0%	0	0.0%	7	=	=
Total	57	55.3%	46	44.7%	103	136	69.0%	61	31.0%	197	+	-
Grand Total	420	41.0%	605	59.0%	1,025	452	44.6%	562	55.4%	1,014	+	-

⁵⁰ Correspondence with MCAST, 06/01/2026

Figures 28 & 29: MCAST Graduates in 2024 and 2025, by percentage⁵¹**Table 19: University of Malta Academic Staff in 2024 and 2025⁵²**

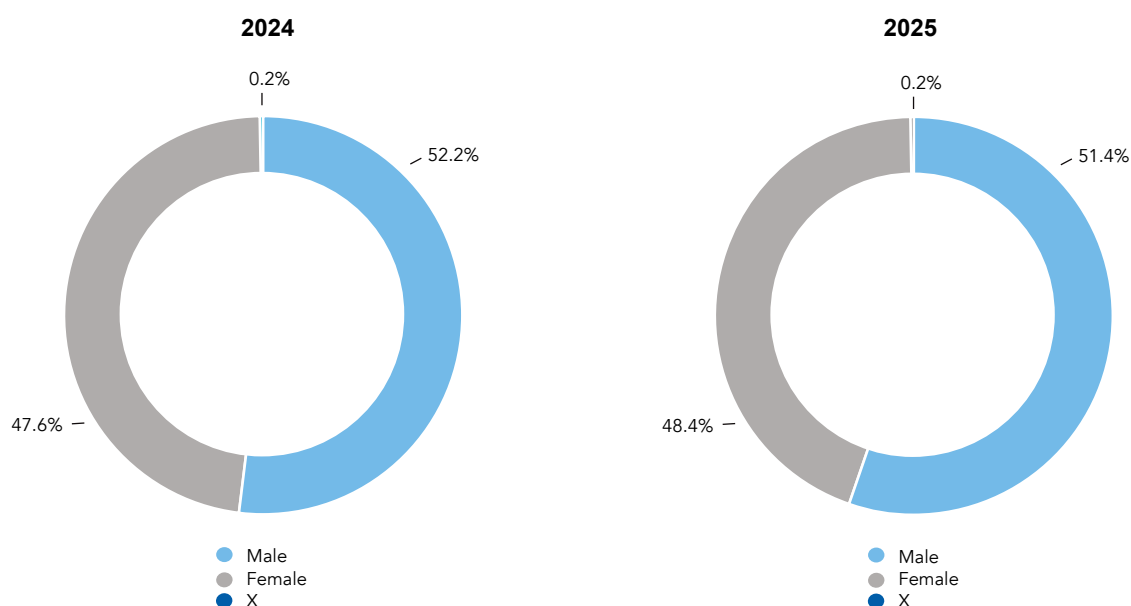
Post	2024					2025					Change in Percentage	
	Males		Females		Totals	Males		Females		Totals	Males	Females
Resident Academics												
Professor	151	77.4%	44	22.6%	195	166	78.3%	46	21.7%	212	+	-
Associate Professor	137	72.5%	52	27.5%	189	140	68.3%	65	31.7%	205	-	+
Senior Lecturer	100	48.8%	105	51.2%	205	89	47.1%	100	52.9%	189	-	+
Lecturer	81	54.7%	67	45.3%	148	76	55.5%	61	44.5%	137	+	-
Assistant Lecturer	12	31.6%	26	68.4%	38	10	31.3%	22	68.8%	32	-	+
Associate Academic	13	43.3%	17	56.7%	30	12	30.8%	27	69.2%	39	-	+
Visiting Staff (part-time)												
Visiting Professor	8	100.0%	0	0.0%	8	9	100.0%	0	0.0%	9	=	=
Visiting Associate Professor	9	90.0%	1	10.0%	10	9	75.0%	3	25.0%	12	-	+
Visiting Senior Lecturer	205	67.9%	97	32.1%	302	213	69.2%	95	30.8%	308	+	-
Visiting Lecturer	117	60.9%	75	39.1%	192	109	58.9%	76	41.1%	185	-	+
Visiting Assistant Lecturer	103	52.0%	95	48.0%	198	102	52.3%	93	47.7%	195	+	-
Junior College												
Senior Lecturer I	11	39.3%	17	60.7%	28	12	44.4%	15	55.6%	27	+	-
Senior Lecturer II	53	46.1%	62	53.9%	115	53	45.3%	64	54.7%	117	-	+
Lecturer	3	27.3%	8	72.7%	11	4	33.3%	8	66.7%	12	+	-
Assistant Lecturer	3	37.5%	5	62.5%	8	2	33.3%	4	66.7%	6	-	+
Total	1,006	60.0%	671	40.0%	1,677	1,006	59.7%	679	40.3%	1,685	-	+

⁵¹ Ibid.⁵² Correspondence with the University of Malta, 09/01/2026

Figures 30 & 31: University of Malta Academic Staff in 2024 & 2025 by percentage⁵³**Table 20: MCAST Academic Staff in 2024 and 2025⁵⁴**

Academic posts at MCAST	2024							2025							Change in Percentage	
	Males		Females		X		Total	Males		Females		X		Total	M	F
Senior Lecturer 3	0	/	0	/	0	/	0	118	58.4%	84	41.6%	0	0.0%	202	/	/
Senior Lecturer 2	156	57.1%	117	42.9%	0	0.0%	273	58	50.9%	56	49.1%	0	0.0%	114	-	+
Senior Lecturer 1	94	42.3%	127	57.2%	1	0.5%	222	87	41.0%	124	58.5%	1	0.5%	212	-	+
Lecturer	37	58.7%	26	41.3%	0	0.0%	63	33	56.9%	25	43.1%	0	0.0%	58	-	+
Assistant Lecturer	28	62.2%	17	37.8%	0	0.0%	45	28	63.6%	16	36.4%	0	0.0%	44	+	-
Total	315	52.2%	287	47.6%	1	0.2%	603	324	51.4%	305	48.4%	1	0.2%	630	-	+

⁵³ Ibid.⁵⁴ Correspondence with MCAST, 14/01/2026

Figures 32 & 33: MCAST Academic Staff in 2024 and 2025 by percentage⁵⁵

COMMENTS

In line with previous years, more women than men graduated as undergraduates and postgraduates from the University of Malta, by over 20 percentage points. Gender segregation across university courses remains significant, with women substantially overrepresented in the Faculty of Arts, Faculty of Laws, Faculty of Medicine and Surgery, Faculty of Education, Faculty of Health Sciences, and Faculty of Social Wellbeing, and strongly underrepresented in the Faculty of Engineering and the Faculty of Information and Communication Technology.

Similarly, more women than men graduate from MCAST, and a comparable pattern of gender segregation is observed in the fields of study chosen by students. With respect to academic staff, at the University of Malta, men significantly outnumber women, particularly in the senior ranks of Professor and Associate Professor. At MCAST, the total number of academics is almost gender-balanced; however, women remain relatively underrepresented among the most senior lecturers.

WOMEN IN THE MEDIA

Table 21: Public broadcasters: presidents and members of the board/council (highest decision-making body) in 2023, 2024 and 2025⁵⁶

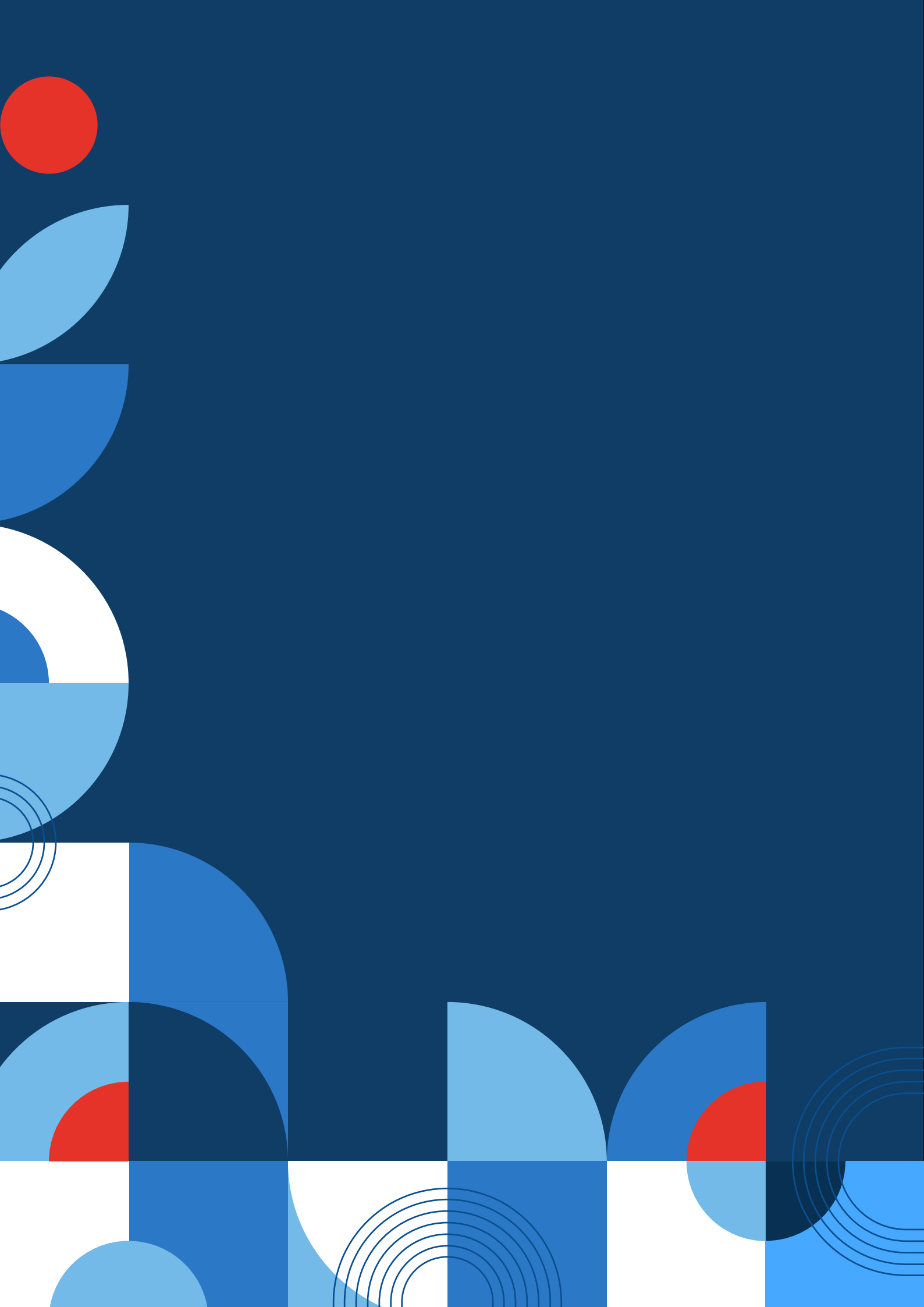
	2023		2024		2025	
	M%	F%	M%	F%	M%	F%
Malta	55.6	44.4	55.6	44.4	55.6	44.4
EU 27 countries (since 2020)	62.5	37.5	62.1	37.9	61.8	38.3

COMMENTS

In Malta, the gender distribution has remained stable across 2023, 2024, and 2025, with women's representation consistently exceeding the EU average.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ https://eige.europa.eu/gender-statistics/dgs/indicator/wmidm_med_pbrc__wmid_media_pbrc_bm



2. Striving for Equality

2.1 INVESTIGATIONS

The NCPE investigates discrimination on the grounds of sex or gender, family responsibilities, sexual orientation, age, religion or belief, racial or ethnic origin, gender identity, gender expression, and sex characteristics in employment, financial institutions, and education. It also investigates discrimination on the grounds of racial or ethnic origin and gender in the provision of goods and services, as well as matters relating to the freedom of movement of workers within the European Union. The NCPE further handles complaints concerning alleged sexual harassment.

The Commissioner may initiate *ex officio* investigations into discriminatory practices falling within NCPE's remit. Moreover, individuals who believe they have experienced discrimination on any of the grounds listed above may also file a complaint and request an investigation by completing the NCPE Complaints Form. The form is available in both English and Maltese on the NCPE website and through the government services portal. Complainants are encouraged to submit any relevant supporting documentation. Complaints and Client Support officials can assist with

the completion of the form and explain the investigation process.

Once a complaint is received, it is acknowledged and assessed by the Commissioner to determine whether it falls within the NCPE's remit. Where this is not the case, complainants are informed accordingly and, where possible, referred to the appropriate entity or department.

When an investigation is opened, the Commissioner requests a report from the party or entity against whom the complaint has been lodged, setting out their position on the allegations. Hearings are then held with the parties concerned and, where relevant, with witnesses. All sittings are voice-recorded, transcribed, and shared with the relevant parties.

At the conclusion of the investigation, the Commissioner issues an opinion on whether a breach of equality legislation has occurred. Where a case involves alleged sexual harassment that may constitute a criminal offence, the opinion may be forwarded to the Commissioner of Police for further action. The Commissioner may also facilitate mediation between the parties or refer cases to the Industrial Tribunal, where appropriate.

Complaints lodged in 2025				
	Women	Men	Ex Officio Investigations	Total
Gender	1	1	0	2
Sexual Harassment	2	0	0	2
Race/Ethnic Origin	1	5	0	6
Gender Identity/Gender Expression/Sex Characteristics	1	0	0	1
Age	1	0	0	1
Sexual Orientation	0	0	0	0
Religion or belief	0	0	0	0
Freedom of Movement	1	1	0	2
Alleged discrimination based on other grounds not within NCPE's remit	1	3	0	4
			Total Complaints	18

CASE SUMMARY: ALLEGED DISCRIMINATION ON GROUNDS OF GENDER IDENTITY AND GENDER EXPRESSION IN EMPLOYMENT

OVERVIEW OF THE COMPLAINT

A complaint was lodged with the Commission by an employee against her employer alleging discrimination on grounds of **gender identity** and **gender expression** in the context of workplace facilities and internal practices. The complainant, a transgender woman, stated that during recruitment her request to be issued with and permitted to wear a female uniform was refused because her identity documents

displayed a male gender marker. Although the uniform request was later granted, she alleged that she was subsequently denied access to the women's changing room unless she first amended the gender marker on her official documents.

The complainant further alleged that she was directed to use either the men's changing room or an accessible gender-neutral bathroom located elsewhere on the premises. She maintained that the alternative space lacked amenities ordinarily available to women employees, including facilities for hair and make-up preparation, and that these arrangements caused her distress, humiliation, and exclusion. She also raised concerns about being inconsistently addressed

by her former name and incorrect gender across internal systems. She requested the Commission's intervention to secure access to facilities aligned with her gender identity or a genuinely equivalent alternative, to ensure correct use of her name and pronouns, and to prevent recurrence.

EMPLOYER'S POSITION

The employer denied any discriminatory intent and stated that, at recruitment, the complainant identified as male and was issued a male uniform. The employer reported that when requested, a female uniform was granted. The employer also pointed out that complainant's performance was satisfactory. It further stated that the organisation provides separate male and female changing rooms, as well as unisex facilities, and that it had no prior record of complaints or concerns raised by the complainant. The employer attributed the situation to a misunderstanding or miscommunication and emphasised its commitment to diversity, inclusion, and dignity at work.

In later submissions, the employer asserted that the male and female changing rooms were identical in layout and amenities, and that the accessible bathroom was proposed only as a short-term space. The employer explained that informal concerns raised by other employees led to the complainant being asked to use the male changing room pending an update to her gender documentation. Photographs and video materials were submitted to support claims of facility parity.

INVESTIGATION AND EVIDENCE

The Commissioner conducted separate sittings with the complainant and the employer's representative and reviewed written correspondence and media evidence. The complainant testified that she had used the women's changing room for a period without incident before being told she could no longer do so unless her documents were amended. She described the alternative offered as a toilet space lacking appropriate amenities for workplace presentation.

The employer maintained that there was no restriction preventing the complainant from using

either changing room, and stated that the issue had not been formally addressed previously. While the employer committed to reviewing the matter, the evidence did not include any records explaining the decision to withdraw access to the women's facilities after she had already been permitted to use them.

APPLICABLE LEGAL FRAMEWORK

The investigation was conducted under national equality legislation which prohibits discrimination in employment on grounds that include gender identity and gender expression. The Commissioner also took guidance from the jurisprudence of the Court of Justice of the European Union, which recognises discrimination arising from gender reassignment as a form of sex discrimination and affirms that conditioning workplace treatment on legal gender markers or medical status is unlawful. The statutory burden-of-proof framework was applied, under which the employer must demonstrate compliance or objective justification once facts giving rise to a presumption of discrimination are established.

FINDINGS AND OPINION

The Commissioner found that withdrawing the complainant's access to the women's changing room unless she amended the gender marker on her documents constituted discrimination in the conditions of employment on the grounds of gender identity and gender expression. The restriction was directly linked to the complainant's documentation status, despite her lived gender and a preceding period of use of the women's facilities.

The Commissioner further found that the employer did not demonstrate that the alternative spaces proposed were of an equivalent practical standard to the women's changing room. While the employer asserted parity between male and female changing rooms, this did not justify excluding the complainant from the women's facilities. The evidence was also insufficient to establish that the accessible bathroom provided like-for-like amenities or convenience for workplace preparation.

The Commissioner concluded that the complainant had established facts from which discrimination could be presumed and that

the employer had not discharged the burden of proof to show lawful justification or proportionate measures. Although concerns regarding misgendering and use of the complainant's former name were examined, the available evidence was insufficient to support a formal finding of harassment.

The complaint was upheld in respect of **discrimination on grounds of gender identity** and **gender expression** in the complainant's terms and conditions of employment. No finding of harassment was made.

RECOMMENDATIONS AND REMEDIAL MEASURES

The Commissioner recommended that the employer:

- Grants the complainant full access to the women's changing room on the same terms as other female employees.
- Implements least-restrictive privacy measures within the women's changing area, such as private or screened cubicles, available to any user who wishes additional privacy and without conditioning the complainant's access.
- Where a private changing space is preferred, ensure that it genuinely matches the practical standard of the women's changing room.
- Ensure the complainant's affirmed name and pronouns are correctly reflected across all internal systems and visible interfaces and inform relevant staff of the requirement to use correct forms of address.

LEARNING AND IMPACT

This case highlights the obligation on employers to ensure that access to workplace facilities is not conditioned on legal gender markers or medical status, and that any measures adopted to address privacy concerns must be proportionate, evidence-based, and the least restrictive available. It also underscores the importance of accurate internal records and respectful communication in safeguarding dignity at work for transgender employees.



INVESTIGATIONS PROCEDURE GUIDE

In 2025, the NCPE developed a guide on its *Investigations Procedure* in both English and Maltese, which is also available on the website. This guide delineates who can lodge a complaint with the NCPE; how a complaint may be submitted; and the possible outcomes following an investigation. It thus serves as a practical tool, providing straightforward information for potential complainants.

2.2 POLICY REVIEW AND RECOMMENDATIONS

NATIONAL POLICIES

An equality perspective is provided by the NCPE to national laws, policies and strategies issued for public consultation. In its reviews, the NCPE evaluates the impact of the proposed actions on different social groups, checks whether the documents contains provisions that are directly or indirectly discriminatory, and proposes the integration of measures that can combat discrimination and achieve equality in practice.

A gender mainstreaming exercise is always promoted for all policies/actions/measures, as per Government policy. The proper implementation of the gender mainstreaming strategy enables policy makers to integrate and address the concerns, experiences and aspirations of women, men, girls and boys from different social groups into any planned action, thus ensuring that all groups are positively affected and that the needs of different cohorts are taken into account.

The NCPE provided its input to the following documents in 2025:

- Malta Labour Migration Policy
- National Sexual Health Strategy 2025-2030
- Assisted Voluntary Euthanasia
- National Alcohol Policy
- Personal Autonomy Act and the Protection of Adults in Situations of Vulnerability Act
- Malta Vision 2050
- MCAST Vision Towards 2030 Strategic Plan
- Pre-Budget 2026 Consultation Document
- National Patient Safety Strategy 2025-2035
- National Transport Master Plan 2030

In its input to the **Malta Labour Migration Policy**, the NCPE emphasised the need to ensure that labour migration measures address the diverse needs and experiences of different social groups. It highlighted the heightened risk of exploitation faced by Third-Country Nationals, particularly where discrimination, harassment and sexual harassment intersect with factors such as gender, age, race or sexual orientation, and called for stronger institutional capacity, legal safeguards and sanctions. The NCPE also stressed the importance of raising awareness of equality and anti-discrimination laws among migrant workers, extending grace periods to reduce dependency on employers, and ensuring that migration decisions and salary thresholds are free from discriminatory bias. Finally, the NCPE underlined the importance of gender-disaggregated data, policy coherence with related national strategies, and complementary measures beyond migration to address labour shortages and demographic challenges.

The NCPE welcomed the **National Sexual Health Strategy 2025–2030** strong emphasis on equality and non-discrimination and highlighted the need to address sexual health within broader structures of inequality that influence harmful sexual behaviour. The importance of comprehensive, well-resourced sexual health education, including adequate training for educators to ensure confidence and effectiveness in addressing sexuality, was underlined. Concerns were raised about minors' access to online pornography, calling

for measures to better protect children and adolescents. Attention was drawn to the sexual and reproductive health and rights of women, especially those in vulnerable situations, and the need for stronger safeguards for women's health and well-being. The NCPE further emphasised the importance of culturally sensitive approaches to reach migrant communities, including strengthened training for cultural mediators and interpreters, and supported the implementation of broad and targeted public awareness campaigns aimed at shifting societal attitudes.

When providing input to the public consultation on **Assisted Voluntary Euthanasia**, the NCPE welcomed the consultation's emphasis on empathy and compassion and highlighted the need for equality considerations to be embedded in proposed procedures and safeguards. It stressed the importance of ensuring that the proposed Regulatory Board is gender-balanced and equipped to recognise and address potential gender and racial biases in healthcare decision-making. Attention was drawn to the heightened risk of coercion faced by individuals in vulnerable situations, including older persons, women and minority groups, and the need to safeguard autonomous decision-making. The NCPE also raised concerns regarding proposed eligibility criteria, noting that limitations related to age-associated conditions and life expectancy may disproportionately affect women's access to Assisted Voluntary Euthanasia, given their higher life expectancy and greater likelihood of developing incurable conditions that significantly impact quality of life. The NCPE further welcomed the introduction of medical wills and emphasised the importance of encouraging both women and men to make informed use of such instruments.



In its input to **Malta Vision 2050**, the NCPE emphasized that economic growth should serve social wellbeing and reduce existing inequalities. To this end, gender and equality mainstreaming should be applied to all policies, measures and resource allocation, supported by gender-disaggregated data and continuous monitoring. It stressed the importance of addressing Malta's low fertility rate through comprehensive work-life balance policies, including improved leave entitlements, flexible working arrangements, childcare reform and financial support for families. The NCPE also underlined the need to promote inclusion and eliminate racism by reducing migrant precarity, strengthening intercultural mediation and tackling discrimination and segregation. Further recommendations addressed ageing, pension adequacy, the revaluation of pay in care, education and welfare sectors, the elimination of precarious work and the exploitation of Third-Country Nationals, and the integration of equality safeguards in the use of Artificial Intelligence. Overall, NCPE called for a cohesive, rights-based Vision that ensures all social groups benefit equitably from Malta's long-term development.

The NCPE welcomed the **MCAST Vision Towards 2030** identification of inclusion as a core value and its overall commitment to equity, while emphasising the need for strategic objectives to be supported by concrete measures, resources, targets and timeframes. It recommended embedding a formal equality duty on MCAST through systematic gender mainstreaming across curricula, policies, administrative procedures and promotional activities, supported by an intersectional approach. The NCPE also commended efforts to increase female participation in traditionally male-dominated fields and stressed the need to actively challenge gender stereotypes. Further recommendations included the use of gender impact assessments, periodic equality audits, and the collection of gender-disaggregated data. Attention was drawn to equality considerations in research, innovation and the ethical use of Artificial Intelligence, calling for safeguards to prevent discriminatory outcomes.

As part of its feedback to the **National Transport Master Plan 2030**, the NCPE emphasised the need for gender and equality mainstreaming across all aspects of transport planning, supported by gender- and socially disaggregated data to better understand the diverse needs and experiences of different population groups. While welcoming the Plan's recognition of accessibility, inclusion and transport equity as key priorities, the NCPE highlighted the lack of concrete and tangible measures reflecting the lived realities of women, older persons, families, migrants and other groups in vulnerable situations. It stressed the importance of inclusive transport infrastructure and services, addressing barriers related to mobility, safety and accessibility. The NCPE also underlined the need to prevent discrimination and racial profiling in enforcement practices, the need to promote anti-racism within public transport services, and to ensure equality-focused training for transport professionals.

EU AND INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

The NCPE continued its activities in the EU and international fora through participation in events, both online and in-person, as well as through the provision of feedback and input to legislative and policy documents on matters pertaining to equality and non-discrimination.

Following the transposition of the **Women on Boards Directive**, the NCPE worked towards the achievement of the Directive's objectives as per its remit, as outlined in Section 2.9 of this report.

The NCPE's work on the **Directives on Standards for Equality Bodies** continued throughout 2025, particularly through the participation in meetings, workshops, and training organised by the European Network of Equality Bodies (Equinet), namely the Standards Lab: From Legal Digest to Impact; Training Building Expertise in Alternative Dispute Resolution for Equality Bodies; and the implementation of the equality body standards project. Moreover, the NCPE reviewed the indicators on the functioning of equality bodies developed by the European Commission, and participated in a meeting of the Expert Group Implementation of EU Equality Law on this topic. Concurrently, at the national



NCPE Commissioner, Ms Renee Laiviera, with Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights, Prof Michael O'Flaherty

level, the NCPE was providing feedback on the draft equality bill that intends to transpose the above-mentioned Directives into Maltese law.

Throughout the years the NCPE has been a pioneer in relation to the gender pay gap and equal pay between women and men, with numerous initiatives to raise awareness on these topics. These initiatives include the development of the NCPE Equal Pay Tool, as well as its active input in the process towards the adoption of the **Pay Transparency Directive**. In 2025, the NCPE participated in Equinet's Pay Transparency Cluster meetings as well as in the 3rd and 4th implementation workshops on the Pay Transparency Directive by the European Commission, gaining further insight on the practical application of the Directive.

In addition, as discussions on the transposition of this Directive—due by June 2026—also ensued at national level, the NCPE participated in various events on the topic. It discussed the transposition of the Directive, and the role of equality bodies with respect to the Directive, in meetings with the Department for Industrial and Employment Relations (DIER) and with the Human Rights Directorate (HRD).

At EU level, developments also included renewed discussions on the proposed **Horizontal Equal Treatment Directive**, following the European Commission's decision to reverse its intention to withdraw the proposal. In this context, the NCPE gave input to discussions held in the Social Questions Working Party and participated in a questionnaire for equality bodies as part of a study by the European

Parliament assessing the impact of the proposed Equal Treatment Directive. Despite these developments, unanimity was not reached at the EPSCO Council in December. The Progress Report explains that: *"Delegations' positions need to be examined in greater detail before potential solutions can be identified. It is hoped that the remaining concerns can be addressed through the constructive engagement of all delegations."*⁵⁷

In addition to legislative developments, the NCPE reviewed the proposed text transposing the Directive on combating **violence against women** and domestic violence at national level and gave input particularly with respect to sexual harassment at the workplace. Furthermore, the NCPE, being an equality body, contributed to the European Commission's reporting on the application of the **Racial Equality Directive** and the **Employment Equality Directive**.

Beyond legislative processes, the NCPE continued to contribute to EU policy development in 2025. Feedback was given to the Opinions drafted by the **Advisory Committee on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men** of the European Commission, namely the Opinion on men, boys and gender equality, and the Opinion on women and poverty. The NCPE Commissioner, Ms Renee Laiviera, is a member of the Advisory Committee.

The NCPE contributed to **Council Conclusions** on topics related to equality, namely on violence against women and domestic violence, and gender equality in the AI-driven digital decade. Input was also provided to an exchange of views in the Social Questions Working Party on the Roadmap for Women's Rights; as well as to sessions of meetings of the Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs Council (EPSCO) addressing policies to support care responsibilities, gender inequalities in the digital environment, intersectional equality, gender-mainstreaming security, and consent in sexual relationships.

⁵⁷ <https://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-14921-2025-INIT/en/pdf>



An Equinet workshop

The NCPE's membership in **Equinet** continued throughout 2025, with active participation in the working groups on communication; strategies and practices; law; gender equality; policy formation; research and data collection; the clusters on age, artificial intelligence, economic and social rights; and the project on standards for equality bodies. NCPE officers also took part in seminars and webinars on specific topics such as the Beijing Platform for Action +30, gender-neutral job evaluations, 25 years of Equinet and Equinet's Annual General Meeting. In addition, the NCPE Commissioner delivered a presentation during the webinar on Advancing LGBTIQ+ Equality in Europe: The role of Equality Bodies. As in previous years, the NCPE also gave feedback to Equinet documents, surveys and questionnaires, which included input to the questionnaire on *Developing a Perspective on Equality Bodies Combating Hate Speech in the times of Disinformation and Social Media*, and information for Equinet's calendar for 2026.

Engagement with the **European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE)** also remained a priority. One of EIGE's most significant publications, the Gender Equality Index, underwent a comprehensive review in 2025 to strengthen its alignment with EU policy priorities, integrate new data and update its methodology. The NCPE, participated in the consultation process related to this update, and disseminated



NCPE Commissioner, Ms Renee Laiviera, presenting the EIGE Gender Equality Index during the Women's Day Conference

the results of the 2025 Index through a press statement. The NCPE also reviewed EIGE's report on the Beijing Platform for Action +30, and the NCPE Commissioner participated in EIGE's 31st Experts Forum Meeting. The NCPE Commissioner, Ms Renee Laiviera, is a member of the EIGE's Experts' Forum.

Further engagement at EU agency level included contributions to the European Union **Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA)**. The NCPE contributed to the Stakeholder Survey 2024 which collected views on the FRA's work; took part in the FRA's survey on the work as part of the FRA's Strategic Plan 2023-2028; and gave feedback to the FRA's Draft Work Programme for 2026.



Committee meeting on Equality and Non-Discrimination of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE)

Additional contributions at EU level included replies to the study on discrimination on the grounds of age in the EU by the European Commission; reporting for the European *Migration Network Annual Report 2024*; participation in meetings of the European Personnel Selection Office (EPSO); and the participation of the NCPE Commissioner in a roundtable discussion on the forthcoming *Action Plan against Cyberbullying* organised by the European Commissioner for Intergenerational Fairness, Youth, Culture and Sport.

In relation to international affairs, the NCPE remained actively involved in, and contributed to, the work undertaken with international institutions. In this regard, the NCPE Commissioner participated as a speaker in the **United Nations (UN)** CSW69 side event *Beijing+30: Advancing women's economic empowerment through decent work and gender-responsive policies*. Here the Commissioner highlighted how mainstreaming the gender perspective at the workplace is a precondition for the well-being and the empowerment of women.

In addition, the NCPE reported on the national measures taken in line with the CSW70 Review Theme: Women's full and effective participation and decision-making in public life, as well as

the elimination of violence, for achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls.

The NCPE also provided information for Malta's fifth to seventh combined periodic reports of the *Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)*, particularly on the national machinery for the advancement of women, sexual harassment, and women in politics.

With respect to the **Council of Europe**, the NCPE Commissioner delivered an intervention during the Conference for Preventing and Combating Hate Crime, in the plenary session on 'Preventing and combating hate crime including criminalised hate speech', held in Strasbourg. The NCPE Commissioner also participated in an exchange of views during a Committee meeting on Equality and Non-Discrimination of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE). Both events were organised during the Maltese Presidency of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe. In addition to this, the NCPE participated in the Annual Seminar with equality bodies organised by the **European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI)** which, in 2025, focused on Advancing Equality in an Era of Democratic Backsliding.



NCPE Commissioner, Ms Renee Laiviera, addressing the PACE Committee meeting on Equality and Non-Discrimination

Further activities related to international policy development and monitoring included feedback to the *Draft Recommendation of the Committee of Ministers on combating technology-facilitated violence against women and girls*, and on the *Draft Recommendation of the Committee of Ministers on Equality and Artificial Intelligence*, and input to the reporting of the first biennial report on the *Council of Europe Gender Equality Strategy 2024-2029*.

Furthermore, input was given to *Malta's Voluntary National Review Report* on the implementation of the relevant United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals. In collaboration with various stakeholders, the NCPE also collated the national replies for the *Family Law questionnaire* of the Women, Business and Law 2026 report of the World Bank Group.

2.3 COMMUNICATIONS

MEDIA

In 2025, the NCPE continued working to raise awareness on equality through its active engagement with the media, using traditional and digital platforms to highlight issues of discrimination, promote equal rights, and shape public discourse. Through articles, press statements, interviews, media campaigns, and active presence on social media, the NCPE raised public awareness on equality and non-discrimination while fostering informed and inclusive public dialogue.



NCPE Commissioner, Ms Renee Laiviera, at a Women's Day event organised by the Fgura Local Council

The total number of contributions in the traditional media amounted to **64**, which included:

Press statements	13
Articles and features	14
Answering journalists' questions	8
Participation in TV and radio programmes	29

2025 recorded an increase in contributions to traditional media compared to the previous year, with a rise in press statements, press contributions, and participation in television and radio programmes. This demonstrates the NCPE's strengthened media engagement and its continued efforts to enhance public awareness, visibility, and outreach through traditional media channels.

The NCPE issued **press statements** in connection with its conferences and in response to a range of topical issues, including:

- Gender balance in politics and the co-option of Dr Ramona Attard to Maltese Parliament
- A case involving a homophobic incident at school
- A call for broadcasters to recognise their responsibility to avoid causing harm, particularly to social groups already experiencing inequality and discrimination
- A holistic plan to address Malta's alarmingly low fertility rate
- The signing of a collective agreement for the NCPE

- A call on the relevant authorities to affirm that individuals in public roles must uphold standards of correctness and refrain from causing social harm
- Malta's ranking in the Gender Equality Index 2025

In 2025, the NCPE published a number of **articles** in both Maltese and English in local newspapers on equality-related issues, which were also shared on the NCPE's Facebook page in order to reach wider audiences and enhance public engagement.

The articles addressed a range of topics, including:

- Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)
- Women and men in leadership positions
- Malta's low fertility rate
- Artificial intelligence and gender equality
- The interconnection between gender equality and the environment
- LGBTIQ+ equality
- Abuse on older persons
- Freedom of movement for workers within the European Union
- The gender pay gap
- Sexual harassment at the workplace
- Racial discrimination

Responding to media questions is an important aspect of the NCPE's communication strategy, as it ensures accurate information is disseminated to the public. The NCPE responded to queries from various media organisations on a range of equality-related topics, including work-life balance, Malta's low fertility rate, the 2026 Budget measures, the EU Women on Boards Directive, the NCPE Equality Mark and Equal Pay Tool certifications, and the NCPE's discriminatory advertising procedure.

A strong presence was maintained on **television** and **radio** programmes throughout the year, reaching broad and diverse audiences, promoting the NCPE's work and mission, and contributing to informed public debate on equality and non-discrimination.

The NCPE's conference 'Perceptions and Attitudes of Women and Men in Malta towards



NCPE Commissioner, Ms Renee Laiviera, on Awla

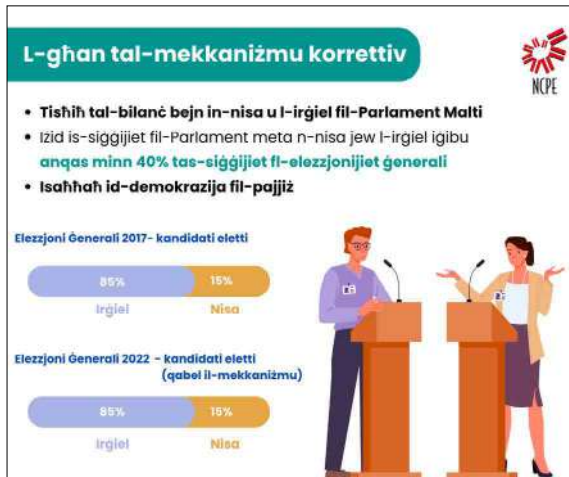
Work-Life Balance: With a Specific Focus on Family Size', held in January, stirred considerable discussion in the media. The findings of the research study were explored through a series of interviews on television and radio programmes, resulting in an increase in media appearances during the year. This heightened presence reflects growing public and media interest in the Commission's work.



NCPE Commissioner, Ms Renee Laiviera, on Popolin



NCPE Commissioner, Ms Renee Laiviera, on Realta'



NCPE Commissioner, Ms Renee Laiviera, on Niskata

In addition to work-life balance and family size, the NCPE addressed a wide range of topics during media engagements, including:

- Discrimination on the grounds of race, ethnic origin, and religion
- Gender equality
- Gender balance in decision-making
- The gender corrective mechanism in Parliament
- Gender-based violence and cyber-harassment

While traditional media remains an important communication channel, the NCPE also maintained a consistent and active presence on **social media** platforms. The NCPE pages across different social media platforms had over 4,700 followers at the end of 2025.

In 2025, the NCPE shared a total of **410 posts** across Facebook, Instagram, X and LinkedIn, in both English and Maltese. The content included infographics, posters, photographs, and videos, and focused on sharing key messages, stories, statistics, and quotes aimed at raising awareness on equality and non-discrimination.

The NCPE's **website** is regularly updated with information on the NCPE's events, articles, press statements, publications, and other initiatives. It also provides detailed guidance for potential victims of discrimination through the Complaints and Information section. Employers interested in obtaining the Equality Mark can find comprehensive information on the certification process, while organisations already holding the

Equality Mark may access guidance on applying for the Equal Pay Tool Certification. In addition, the website hosts the Directory of Professional Women, an initiative aimed at addressing the under-representation of women in decision-making roles across both the public and private sectors.

AWARENESS-RAISING CAMPAIGNS

Awareness-raising campaigns play an important role in informing the public, challenging stereotypes, and fostering understanding of equality, diversity and non-discrimination. They contribute to behavioural and attitudinal change by increasing knowledge and encouraging inclusive practices across society.

In this context, the NCPE not only developed and implemented its own awareness-raising campaigns, but also actively supported and collaborated with other stakeholders in the delivery of initiatives.

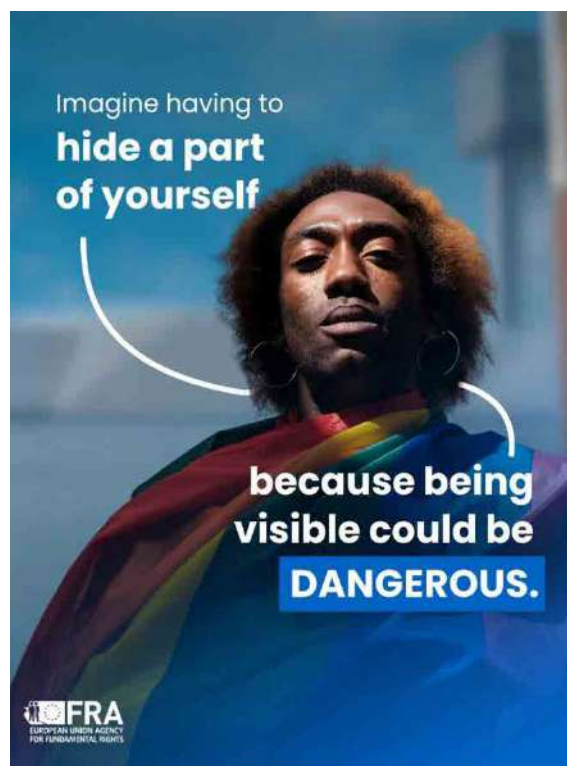


NCPE Commissioner, Ms Renee Laiviera, on Empower to Integrate

What do you choose to see? – FRA campaign

As part of its awareness-raising efforts, the NCPE joined the EU Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) campaign ‘What do you choose to see?’, which sought to challenge **harmful stereotypes** and promote equality and fundamental rights across the European Union.

The campaign highlighted lived experiences of discrimination, encouraging the public to look beyond stereotypes and recognise the realities faced by different groups. In this context, the NCPE disseminated FRA campaign materials, including statistics, infographics, and videos, across its Facebook, Instagram, and LinkedIn platforms.



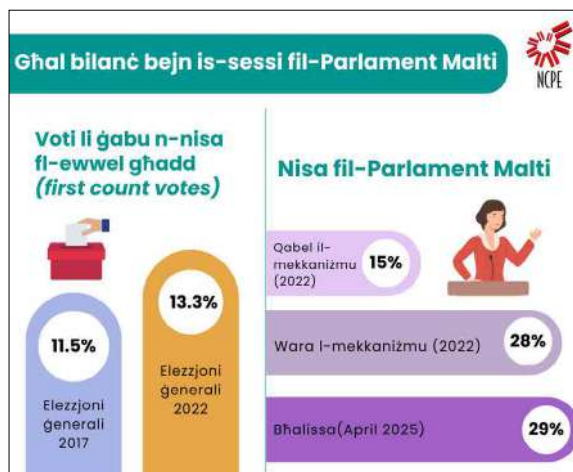
Shared content included videos on *Being Black in the EU*, as well as materials on *Being Muslim in the EU*, published in connection with the International Day Commemorating the Victims of Acts of Violence Based on Religion or Belief.

Additional campaign content focused on *Being LGBTIQ in the EU*, shared during Malta Pride Week, and *Being Older in the EU*, marked through the dissemination of a video, including statistical data, to commemorate the International Day of Older Persons.

What is the Gender Corrective Mechanism?

In response to several misinterpretations of the **gender corrective mechanism** circulating on social media, the NCPE developed three infographics outlining the purpose, scope, and application of this mechanism.

These infographics were disseminated and boosted on Facebook to enhance public understanding and ensure that accurate information reached a wider audience.



Raising awareness of the NCPE's work

To enhance public awareness of the NCPE's work, a poster was developed in both English and Maltese and disseminated in digital and print formats to a wide range of stakeholders, ensuring broad national reach.

Soft copies of the posters were shared with government bodies, Equality Mark-certified organisations, student organisations, academic institutions, and NGOs. Printed posters were distributed across various organisations, including regional committees, local councils, tertiary education institutions, colleges, ministries, clinics, Mater Dei Hospital, trade unions and employers' associations, post office branches, servizz.gov regional hubs, and public libraries.

The campaign received positive feedback, with members of the public indicating that they saw the posters displayed across these locations, demonstrating the campaign's effective reach and visibility.



Sexual harassment should not be part of anyone's career path.



Sexual harassment at the workplace awareness campaign

As part of the **16 Days of Activism** against Gender-Based Violence, the NCPE implemented an awareness-raising campaign focusing on sexual harassment in the workplace. The campaign sought to underline the unacceptability of such behaviour, promote safe and respectful working environments, and provide information on available support services.

The campaign comprised of a series of social media posts featuring both content developed by the NCPE and other materials produced by key national and European stakeholders.





Shared content included NCPE materials such as videos addressing violence against women, and posters specifically focused on sexual harassment in the workplace. In addition, videos produced by the Malta Women's Lobby were disseminated, alongside materials by the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) and the EU Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA), including videos and infographics addressing sexual harassment in workplace settings.

OUTREACH ACTIVITIES

The NCPE actively engaged with the public in 2025 through various outreach activities.

Public Service Expo 2025

In May, the NCPE participated in the Public Service Expo 2025, offering a variety of engaging activities to raise awareness on the NCPE's work. Attendees had the opportunity to engage with interactive crossword and word search games available in both English and Maltese, displayed on a board. A hard copy of these games was also provided. Moreover, a quiz was made available through QR codes. Merchandise was distributed including twist-top water bottles, shopping list magnets, and wireless mouse. Information leaflets on the NCPE's work and on sexual harassment at the workplace were also handed out in both English and Maltese.



Informative videos highlighting the NCPE's work, the Equality Mark, and how to submit complaints were showcased, while QR codes were created for easy access to the NCPE's website and social media platforms, ensuring greater outreach and accessibility for the public.

The expo provided an excellent platform for the NCPE to engage with the general public, enhance understanding of equality issues, and encourage individuals to take action against discrimination.

Freshers' Week 2025

The NCPE participated in Freshers' Week at the University of Malta, Junior College, and MCAST, engaging with students at the start of their academic year. The NCPE staff met students, discussed topics related to equality and discrimination, answered their questions and raised awareness on the NCPE's work.



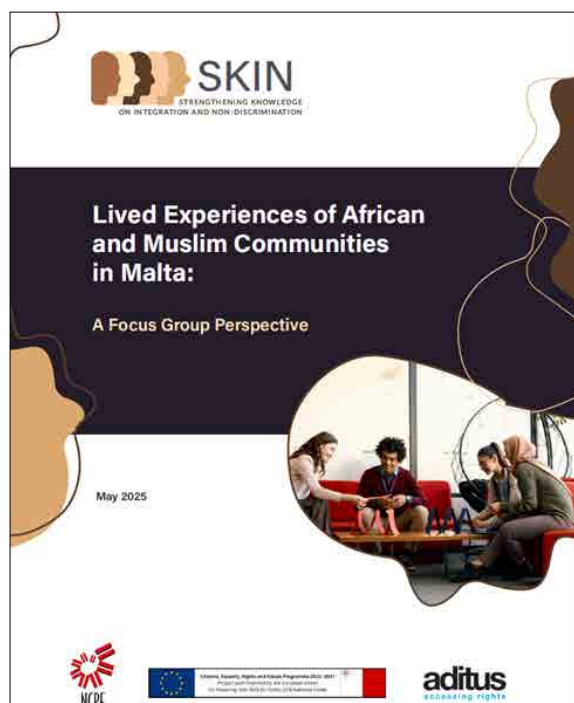
Three students, one each from the University of Malta, Junior College, and MCAST, who visited the NCPE stand during Freshers' Week, correctly completed the NCPE's online quiz and were given a smartwatch as part of the event.



2.4 RESEARCH

STRENGTHENING KNOWLEDGE ON INTEGRATION AND NON-DISCRIMINATION

In part fulfilment of the Strengthening Knowledge on Integration and Non-Discrimination (SKIN) project, in 2025 the NCPE finalised a set of focus groups with migrants, specifically people of African descent, or persons of colour, and Muslims to explore their distinct circumstances and needs, and to better understand the discrimination they encounter.



SKIN Focus Groups Report

Following the finalisation of the focus groups, the NCPE compiled the research report *Lived Experiences of African and Muslim Communities in Malta: A Focus Group Perspective* and presented it during the final conference of the SKIN project. The research report delineates the ambivalent and layered realities of living as a person of African descent and/or Muslim in Malta. Most participants recounted stories of kindness and friendship. Yet, these accounts were often accompanied by experiences of prejudice and discrimination in different spheres.

Following the focus groups, an *Action Plan* was designed to support the NCPE in advancing

its efforts to further enhance equality on the grounds of race/ethnic origin and religion/belief, particularly in relation to outreach, empowerment through knowledge, and investigation of complaints.

THE PREVALENCE OF AGE DISCRIMINATION AT THE WORKPLACE

In 2025, the NCPE initiated work on a research study on the prevalence of age discrimination at the workplace. This study was timely and relevant for the NCPE in view of the underreporting of cases of discrimination on the ground of age, since the inclusion of this ground in the NCPE's remit in 2012.

Moreover, data shows that the Maltese consider age to be the third most significant factor disadvantaging a candidate when an employer must choose between applicants with equal skills and qualifications.

Initial preparatory work for this research entailed desk research on the topic; consultation with equality bodies who are members of Equinet, that researched the same topic; discussions with the Belgian equality body UNIA on their study on age discrimination; and an application under the European Commission's Exchange Programme of Non-Discrimination, Equality and Diversity Expert Groups 2026, for capacity building of the NCPE employees working on the research to be better equipped in this regard.

Moreover, the NCPE has drafted a research proposal delineating a rationale and the objectives of the study *The Prevalence of Age Discrimination at the Workplace*, and compiled different sets of focus group questions for employees, employers, and trade unions, respectively, in preparation for this research study.

2.5 THE FUTURE OF THE HUMAN WORKFORCE: EMBRACING CHANGE, CHALLENGES, AND OPPORTUNITIES

The NCPE is a project partner of the EU-funded project 'The Future of the Human Workforce: Embracing Change, Challenges, and Opportunities' (TRANSFORM), implemented in



TRANSFORM Expert Roundtable Symposium

collaboration with eight partner countries. The TRANSFORM project focuses on exploring the future of the human workforce in a rapidly changing world, and to understand the impact of automation, AI, and robotics on jobs and skills.

The project was initiated at end of 2024, with 2025 seeing the implementation of most of the activities planned. In the first quarter of 2025, a Europe-wide **online survey** entitled *Blueprint of Tomorrow: Introducing the Future of Human Workforce* was conducted across nine European countries to explore citizens' views on the future of work. The survey examined anticipated challenges and opportunities in the evolving labour market and captured European citizens' perspectives on employment trends, skills development, workplace wellbeing, and the impact of technological advancements such as AI and automation.

A total of 833 valid responses were collected (69% female and 31% male), with Malta contributing 122 responses, representing 15% of the total sample. Survey findings indicated that the labour market is undergoing rapid transformation driven by technological, demographic, and environmental factors. Most respondents expressed confidence in their ability to adapt to change and identified AI literacy as a critical future skill. The results also highlighted the need for inclusive policies to support job security, skills development, and employee wellbeing, alongside strong support for flexible and hybrid working arrangements. The results were used to inform policy discussions and

contribute to future workforce strategies aimed at improving preparedness for labour market transformations.

To complement the quantitative data, **focus groups** were conducted with key stakeholders, including employers, HR professionals, employees, trade unions, youth representatives, and NGOs, providing in-depth qualitative insights. In total, 23 focus groups were held across the nine EU countries, involving 137 participants (59% women and 41% men). Discussions focused on upskilling, ethical AI governance, and workplace wellbeing.

The focus group findings revealed that while AI is widely perceived as a driver of efficiency, it also raises concerns regarding job security, skills gaps, and mental strain. Employers emphasised the importance of continuous reskilling, whereas employees reported limited access to structured training and expressed ethical concerns related to AI use. Support for green transitions was found to be constrained by financial and regulatory barriers, particularly for SMEs. Although flexible working arrangements were highly valued, participants also identified risks such as social isolation, excessive monitoring, and reduced employee engagement.

In March 2025, the Slovenian partners Faculty of Organisation Studies (FOS) hosted a virtual **Interdisciplinary Conference** about the Future of Human Workforce, attracting over 235 participants from 16 countries. The

conference addressed topics including AI and gender equality, organisational ethics, workforce adaptation, and demographic change. It examined how technological, demographic, and ethical shifts are shaping the future of work, with a particular focus on digital and green transitions, employee wellbeing, organisational responsibility, and migration trends.

Additionally, an **Expert Roundtable Symposium** held in Portugal in June 2025 strengthened collaboration among the nine project partners. The event facilitated dialogue and co-creation around future workforce policies, enabled the exchange of best practices, and increased awareness of EU labour rights and policies.

13 Participatory Design Thinking Workshops for the Future of the Workforce 2050 were conducted across eight EU countries, involving 215 citizens. Participants imagined what Europe's labour market might look like 10 to 50 years from now. The outcome was a citizen-driven vision that promotes a technologically advanced, equitable, and human-centred future of work.

Ethical Consideration Panels were held to discuss future workforce challenges in order to guide stakeholders in navigating ethical considerations around workers' rights, ensuring that resulting policies are both forward-looking and grounded in strong ethical principles. The aim was to critically examine and debate the ethical implications of technological advancements and automation, with a focus on privacy, fairness, and worker well-being.



TRANSFORM Workshop



NCPE Manager (Projects), Ms Annalise Frantz, addressing the TRANSFORM Conference

The NCPE took the lead in organising a **hybrid panel conference** entitled 'The Meaning of Work and the importance of ensuring Equality: Bridging Contemporary Views with Future Vision', which saw the participation of 164 individuals. In November 2025 an online **Policy Hackathon** entitled 'Shaping the Future of the Human Workforce' was conducted during which stakeholders engaged in co-creating forward-looking policies.

2.6 STRENGTHENING KNOWLEDGE ON INTEGRATION AND NON-DISCRIMINATION

The year 2025 saw the last few months of implementation of the EU-funded project 'Strengthening Knowledge on Integration and Non-Discrimination' (SKIN) which focused on identifying and addressing racism and discrimination experienced by **people of African descent** and **Muslim communities** in Malta.



The project was implemented in collaboration with aditus foundation.

The first quarter of 2025 focused on concluding the **outreach events**, namely the focus groups and training sessions. A focus group session with women of African descent was held in January and a training session with Muslim women and women of African descent was held in February. The focus group shed light on the distinct circumstances and needs of the target group and provided for a deeper insight into the day-to-day discrimination they experience. The training session was focused on addressing cases of discrimination, harassment and other forms of abuse, and was attended by a total of eight women.

The feedback from all the focus groups conducted through the SKIN project was collated and analysed in a report entitled *Lived Experiences of African and Muslim Communities in Malta: A Focus Group Perspective*, which was published in May 2025. The report presents the findings of the focus groups, detailing the discourse but more importantly analysing the responses. It outlines the discussions held during these sessions, highlights common themes as well as diverse experiences. The focus groups were designed to encourage open and honest dialogue that enabled the distinctions between the different groups to be assessed by the NCPE. Unique experiences and key differences affecting persons of African descent and Muslims were delineated in different sections of the report.

Overall, these focus groups served a dual purpose. On the one hand, they offered a valuable platform for individuals to voice their lived realities, concerns, and aspirations in a

safe and inclusive space. On the other hand, they equipped the NCPE with essential insights that are necessary for informed decision-making.

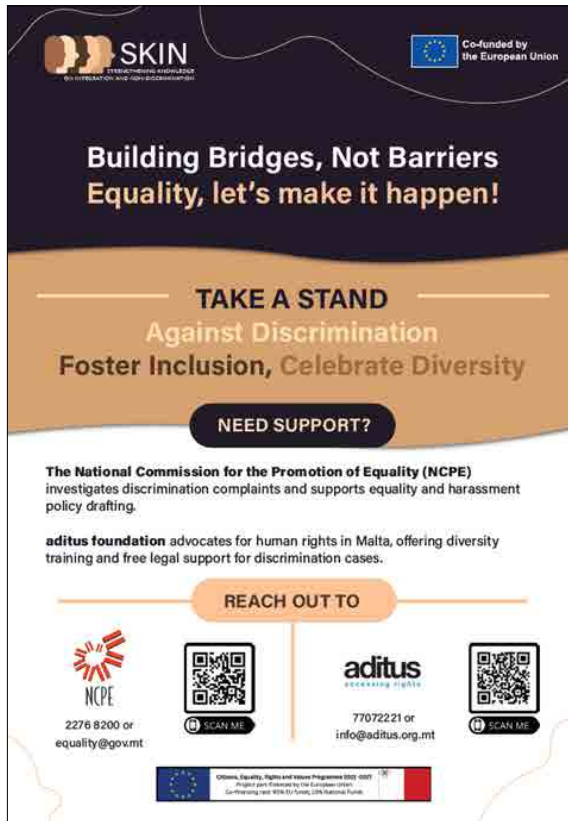
An **Action Plan** for the NCPE was developed as a result of the focus group analysis, which plan is designed to support the NCPE in advancing its efforts to further enhance equality on the grounds of race/ethnic origin and religion/belief.

An **awareness-raising campaign** was implemented in 2025 to educate and raise awareness on integration with a particular focus on racism, Afrophobia, anti-Muslim hatred, and discrimination on the grounds of race / ethnic origin and religion.

Two visual newspaper articles were published in February: one on diversity management at the workplace and the other on tackling workplace discrimination. The articles were published in both the English and Maltese languages to ensure ease of reference and wide dissemination.

Leaflets on finding support against discrimination were produced and disseminated with relevant stakeholders as well as uploaded on the page website. In order to reach the project target groups, the leaflets were produced in four languages: English, Maltese, French and Arabic.





In June 2025, a series of YouTube advertisements were uploaded and shared on the NCPE's YouTube Channel, addressing key themes including the assertion that skills are not defined by religion, the recognition that prejudice denies work opportunities, the principle that religion should not define an individual's professional narrative, the affirmation that equal treatment is a fundamental right rather than a privilege, and the condemnation of unequal pay for equal work as a discriminatory practice. Each advert ends with a call to action to contact either the NCPE or aditus foundation.



SKIN campaign on promoting an inclusive society

Posters were designed, printed and disseminated with relevant stakeholders such as NGOs, CSOs, local councils, JobsPlus, and shared online with the aim of informing people about the services offered by the NCPE and by aditus foundation.

A **PR Campaign** on promoting a more inclusive society was carried out in the first quarter of 2025. The NCPE and aditus foundation participated in various national TV programmes and radio shows to raise awareness on the project aims and objectives, whilst discussing the outcome of the activities carried out.

Two final **consultation sessions** between the project partners, the NCPE and aditus foundation, were held in March and in June. These sessions strengthened collaboration between the two entities through sharing of knowledge and expertise. The SKIN project was discussed in detail, analysing the data gathered whilst planning for future actions.

The main outcomes and recommendations of the project were presented at the **Final Conference**, which took place in June 2025.



SKIN Final Conference

2.7 MANAGING EU FUNDS

The **SKIN project** was concluded in mid-2025, marking the commencement of the formal closure process. All required administrative and financial reports were duly submitted to the European Commission, and following a positive assessment, the remaining project financial balance was disbursed to the NCPE, confirming the project's successful completion.

In parallel, the implementation of the **TRANSFORM project** remained a key priority for the NCPE, carried out in close collaboration with eight EU partner organisations. All nine work packages were delivered in a timely and effective manner, with the corresponding technical reports submitted as required. The strong cooperation and coordinated efforts across the nine partner countries were instrumental to the project's successful implementation and outcomes.

In 2025, the NCPE actively **pursued EU funding** through multiple project submissions and collaborative partnerships.



Senior Executive (Projects), Mr Edmond Apap, addressing the SKIN Final Conference

Early in the year, the NCPE drafted and submitted a proposal entitled 'Harassment Education, Awareness and Response' (HEAR) under the CERV funding programme. This project aimed to prevent and combat gender-based violence, with a particular focus on sexual harassment in the workplace, consent education, and technology-facilitated violence against women and girls. The proposal involved a consortium of six partners, with the NCPE as lead coordinator; however, the European Commission informed the NCPE that the project was not selected due to insufficient funding.

In the second quarter of 2025, the NCPE partnered on 'FAIRWAGE - Strengthening Trade Unions', led by the General Workers' Union (GWU). This proposal, submitted under the SOCPL funding programme, was similarly not granted funding due to budgetary constraints.

During the third quarter, the NCPE entered two additional partnerships. The first, 'SSD - Support for Social Dialogue in the Age of Platform Work and Flexible Employment', also led by the GWU under the SOCPL programme, successfully secured funding by the end of 2025, with implementation expected to commence in the first half of 2026.

The second, 'MADWARI – Malta's Approach towards Diversity, Anti-Racism and Inclusion', led by the Human Rights Directorate (HRD) under the CERV programme, is currently under evaluation, with the outcome expected in the second quarter of 2026. These activities reflect the NCPE's ongoing commitment to advancing equality, social dialogue, and inclusion through strategic European partnerships.



Parliamentary Secretary for Equality and Reforms, Hon. Rebecca Buttigieg, addressing the TRANSFORM Conference

2.8 TRAINING

One of the NCPE's main roles is to provide training on equality, discrimination, harassment, and sexual harassment. It regularly receives requests for the delivery of sessions from Government departments/entities, private companies and educational institutions.

When a requested topic falls within the NCPE's mandate, an initial meeting is held with the organisation to tailor the session to its specific needs, objectives, and target audience.

The NCPE's preferred mode of delivery of sessions is in-person as this encourages more engaging discussion with the participants. However, online training is also provided when truly necessary and when it is the most convenient option for the organisation and the participants.

During 2025, as in previous years, the NCPE continued receiving requests for training from both the public and the private sector. A total of 73 sessions, amounting to 128 hours, were delivered to over 1,300 participants from various sectors, such as employees from private companies and the public sector, healthcare workers, teachers and students.

No. of training sessions	73
Hours of training	128
No. of participants	1,305

Throughout the year, the NCPE delivered regular training sessions to new staff of **Mater Dei Hospital**, including nurses, carers, midwives



NCPE training

or ambulance respondents and other healthcare workers, as part of their induction sessions. These sessions focused on workplace equality, addressing issues such as non-discriminatory practices and fostering an inclusive working environment, as well as equality in service provision, especially within the healthcare sector.

As in previous years, the NCPE recognised the importance of addressing gender equality within the **education sector**. Following the positive response to earlier sessions, the NCPE was once again invited to deliver an intensive half-day training session for career guidance teachers and advisors. The session focused on how to address gender stereotypes and roles among young students that may influence their career choices and also included practical group work. This training will be delivered again in 2026.

Among the various sessions delivered by the NCPE in 2025, sessions were also held at elderly **day care centres**, focusing on gender equality and diversity, including fostering an



NCPE Manager (Equality), Ms Joana Micallef, delivering training



NCPE session at a Day Care Centre

understanding of multiculturalism within their local communities.

Three training sessions were conducted for 61 **servizz.gov** employees, focusing on equality and non-discrimination legislation. These sessions included practical case scenarios reflecting situations **servizz.gov** employees may encounter in their daily work.

All **Jobsplus** employees participated in online training sessions covering discrimination, harassment and sexual harassment. Additionally, several **Transport Malta** employees also received training from the NCPE, which covered topics such as diversity management, equality and non-discrimination. The latter will be delivered again in 2026.

The below are the topics that the NCPE covers during its training sessions:

Equality law: The basic principles of Maltese equality legislation and EU Directives are explained and discussed. The different grounds of discrimination in Maltese law are outlined as well as the different spheres it covers and ways of redress for victims of discrimination. Discussions also focus on the definition of important provisions within the law such as direct and indirect discrimination, victimisation, burden of proof, harassment, and sexual harassment.

Different social identities: The different characteristics protected by law are explained in detail. The NCPE highlights that equality is more than simple 'non-discrimination.' Equality entails being attentive to the various needs and concerns of different social groups by taking the needs of everyone into account in each aspect of our life, since the structures currently in place do not necessarily ensure equality in practice. Thus, to achieve equality there must be a proactive effort at building inclusive settings. The examples of equality given by the NCPE vary depending on the target audience of that training session.

Harassment and sexual harassment: The definitions of harassment and sexual harassment are presented and discussed as a grievous form of discrimination, highlighting sexual harassment as a criminal offence. The difference between the two is elucidated, and examples provided. The obligations emanating from law related to addressing and preventing sexual harassment

are explained, and practical ways to deal with sexual harassment, as well as good practices for its prevention, are outlined.

Diversity management: The topic of diversity management is most often discussed when the target audience includes top management. The NCPE highlights the importance of understanding that diversity management is not about having different rules for different groups but rather about the valorisation of different identities, which will ultimately benefit both employees, as well as the work processes and outcomes. Practical ways of managing diversity are outlined and discussed with the participants.

Gender mainstreaming: The meaning of the strategy of gender mainstreaming is explained and the participants are guided through the gender mainstreaming process as well as the gender mainstreaming reporting obligations connected to OPM Circular 15/2012 *Gender Mainstreaming in Practice*.

GENDER MAINSTREAMING

To ensure effective implementation of the gender mainstreaming strategy and reporting obligations, the NCPE organises regular training and information sessions for public administration employees. In addition, targeted training sessions on the reporting obligations for the gender mainstreaming strategy are organised each year ahead of the deadline for submission of the report.

The gender mainstreaming strategy is defined as *"the (re) organisation, improvement, development and evaluation of policy processes, so that a gender equality perspective is incorporated in all policies at all levels and at all stages, by the actors normally involved in policymaking"* (Council of Europe).

Gender mainstreaming has been official Government policy since June 2000, which policy was reiterated in 2012 through **OPM Circular No.15/2012** to ensure that policies and practices are gender mainstreamed and to have a consolidated yearly report on developments in this regard. This report is to be forwarded to the NCPE on an annual basis and a synopsis of it is to be included in the Department's Annual Report. The NCPE then compiles a single evaluation report, for the attention of the Permanent Secretary responsible for equality.



NCPE training on equality mainstreaming in education

Since 2012, the NCPE delivered a total of 78 training sessions to over 1,070 public administration employees on the gender mainstreaming strategy and reporting obligations.

After delivering gender mainstreaming training to educators at the Institute for Education in 2024, the NCPE was asked to provide similar sessions for other lecturers and new staff members in 2025.

Apart from sessions to the public administration, the NCPE annually delivers several equality mainstreaming lectures to University of Malta students at the Department of Gender and Sexualities.

A total of **137 reports** were submitted to the NCPE in 2025, which is comparable to the previous year and slightly more than those received in 2023.

Upon reviewing these reports, the NCPE observed that even after three years of implementing the Gender Equality and Mainstreaming Strategy and Action Plan (GEMSAP), there is still a limited understanding of gender mainstreaming. Most consider gender mainstreaming simply a human resources task, with family-friendly measures viewed as its sole component.

Consistent with previous recommendations, the NCPE advised revising and replacing OPM Circular 15/2012 as planned in Action 1.3.3 of GEMSAP. An updated draft of this circular was then submitted by the NCPE to the Permanent Secretary responsible for equality.

The NCPE also recommended hands-on, comprehensive training for public officers across all levels, with adequate funding to cover the

entire public sector. This would help officers gain expertise in this area and better implement government policy, especially among top management.

As in earlier years, the NCPE stressed the need for government departments and entities to regularly produce and use gender-disaggregated statistics in their daily work for the effective implementation of the gender mainstreaming strategy.

STAFF TRAINING

Throughout 2025, **NCPE officials** participated in a range of training and information sessions aimed at strengthening institutional capacity and staff competencies.

These included online information sessions on the European Commission's Training Manual on Fundamental Rights in EU Funding and the CERV Daphne Programme, as well as practical in-person training such as a half-day First Aid Course and Fire Warden Training. In addition, all officials took part in an online training session on the SharePoint platform in November, supporting improved digital collaboration and internal processes.

2.9 WOMEN ON BOARDS DIRECTIVE

Following last year's transposition of Article 10 of the Women on Boards Directive to L.N. 376 of 2024, the NCPE's remit was widened to *"promote, analyse, monitor and support gender balance on boards of listed companies in order to compile a yearly report on the implementation of the Directive"*.

The Directive seeks to achieve a more gender balanced representation among the directors of companies listed on the stock exchange by establishing effective measures that aim to accelerate progress towards gender balance.

By **30 June 2026**, the listed companies are to reach either of the following objectives, as set out in the Directive:

- members of the underrepresented sex hold at least 40 % of **non-executive director positions**; or

- members of the underrepresented sex hold at least 33 % of **all director positions**, including both executive and non-executive.



In preparation for the 2026 deadline for the largest listed companies to achieve the above-mentioned objectives, the NCPE identified the seven companies that fall within the scope of the Directive. These companies were then contacted to obtain information on gender representation on their boards.

Analysis of the data provided showed that three companies were in line with at least one of the Directive's Objectives, and one of these companies was in line with both Objectives.

The NCPE informed the companies of its findings regarding gender representation and reminded them of the responsibilities set out by the Directive.

The NCPE also explained how Article 6 of the Directive specifies the *Means to achieve the objectives*, namely:

- Listed companies which do not achieve the objectives have to adjust the process for selecting candidates for appointment or election to director positions; candidates shall be selected on the basis of a comparative assessment of the qualifications of each candidate.
- When choosing between candidates who are equally qualified in terms of suitability, competence and professional performance, priority is given to the candidate of the underrepresented sex unless, in exceptional cases, reasons of greater legal weight, such as the pursuit of other diversity policies tilt the balance in favour of the candidate of the other sex.
- Where the process for selecting candidates for appointment or election to director position is made through a vote of shareholders or employees, listed companies have to ensure that voters are properly informed regarding the measures provided for in this Directive, including penalties for non-compliance by the listed company.

To further aid companies in improving their gender representation on their boards, the NCPE produced and published a factsheet on the Women on Boards Directive⁵⁸ on its website and social media platforms.

Aggregated data on gender representation on the 7 large-listed companies as at June/July 2025							
Total No. of Directors on largest-listed companies		Executive Directors		Non-executive Directors		Total of directors positions: executive and non-executive	
		M	F	M	F	M	F
61	Amount	8	1	40	12	48	13
	%	88.88	11.11	78.43	23.52	78.68	21.31

58 https://ncpe.gov.mt/our-publications-and-resources/resources-amp-tools/?fbclid=IwY2xjawPayalleHRuA2FibQIxMABicmlkETF1cndybFZsWnICZmtaaEhic3J0YwZhcHBfaWQQMjlyMDM5MTc4ODIwMDg5MgABHoqxOer5FG7sPAu-Y1n-qMLYKtG3fduH5oLsO9cW5ploWZSCfsQkEFt1_BK_aem_9VqXndpmpgOqqiBI95gjwDQ

2.10 DISCRIMINATION IN ADVERTISING

According to Article 10 of CAP. 456, it is unlawful:

“(1) ...for persons to publish or display or cause to be published or displayed any advertisement, or, otherwise, to advertise a vacancy for employment which discriminates between job seekers ...”.

The NCPE reviews newspapers on a daily basis, both in print and online, to identify discriminatory job advertisements. In addition, the NCPE periodically encourages the general public to report any discriminatory adverts they encounter, particularly online, so that appropriate action may be taken.

The **Inclusive Advertising Guidelines**, available on the NCPE’s website, were updated in 2025. These guidelines are designed for companies advertising job vacancies, as well as media professionals responsible for publishing such advertisements in both traditional and online platforms, with the aim of safeguarding equality in the language and images used.

In 2025, **eight discriminatory job adverts** were identified by the NCPE. These adverts contained gender-discriminatory terminology such as “*salesgirls*”, “*waiter*”, and “*watchmen*”. In each case, the NCPE informed both the publisher and the company of the discriminatory advert and provided guidance on appropriate alternative wording. This approach resulted in positive outcomes, with most companies amending their advertisements in line with the NCPE recommendations.

The table below outlines the total number of discriminatory job advertisements identified in recent years:

Year	Total no. of discriminatory adverts
2025	8
2024	13
2023	12
2022	13
2021	10

Members of the general public who encounter any discriminatory advert are encouraged to contact the NCPE via email at equality@gov.mt.

2.11 REQUESTS FOR INFORMATION

Requests for Information (RFIs) are received on a regular basis from the general public as well as from various entities and agencies, both local and international, requiring information on topics related to the NCPE’s remit. When possible, individuals who request information that is not within the NCPE’s remit are referred to the relevant entity that can provide further assistance.

Total Number of Requests for Information received in 2025

Year	2025		
	Women	Men	Total
Gender	11	3	28
Sexual Harassment	0	0	0
Race/Ethnic Origin	2	1	3
Gender Identity, Gender Expression & Sex Characteristics	2	1	3
Age	2	0	2
Sexual Orientation	0	0	0
Religion/Belief	0	1	1
Freedom of Movement	0	0	0
Others /	2	4	6
Not within NCPE’s remit			
Total RFI received	19	10	*29

* 2 RFIs covered more than one ground

2.12 DIRECTORY OF PROFESSIONAL WOMEN

The Directory of Professional Women seeks to enhance the visibility of professional women and their competencies across a wide range of fields. Launched by the NCPE in 2015, this online directory provides information on the qualifications, experience, and skills of Maltese and Gozitan professional women.

It serves as a resource to support the identification of women across sectors for potential appointment to boards and committees and for consideration in decision-making roles within the labour market.

By the end of year 2025, there were **278 professional women** registered on the online Directory. The largest number of women are in the sectors of the economy, social wellbeing and health science.

Adverts related to the Directory for Professional Women were shared four times on the NCPE's Facebook page throughout the year.

2.13 LIBRARY AND DOCUMENTATION CENTRE

The NCPE Library and Documentation Centre, situated at the NCPE premises in Blata I-Bajda, holds a collection of more than **7,470 publications**, including books, journals, and articles, which serve as a valuable resource for research on equality and discrimination.

In addition, the library provides access to a selection of local newspaper articles covering these subject areas. Databases containing records of the library's publications and newspaper articles are accessible through the NCPE's website.

The NCPE Library and Documentation Centre is available for use by appointment.



3. The Equality Mark



2025 marked the 15th anniversary of the Equality Mark Certification, an initiative which started in 2010 through an EU-funded project and was continued by the NCPE as its own initiative due to its success.

In 2025, the NCPE certified **3 new organisations** with the Equality Mark, whilst another **23 organisations** were re-certified.

By the end of 2025, there were **155 companies** with more than **37,640 employees** benefitting from the advantages that come with being an Equality Mark certified organisation.

The Equality Mark is awarded to organisations that make gender equality one of their values and whose management is based on the recognition

and promotion of the potential of all employees: both women and men, and persons with caring responsibilities. Organisations certified with the Equality Mark must demonstrate a commitment towards gender equality best practices that go beyond legal requirements.

The Equality Mark offers tangible benefits to organisations, enhancing their ability to attract the full talent pool of human resources and positioning them as employers of choice. This can lead to reduced staff turnover, lower recruitment costs, and mitigation of potential reputational risks.

Certified equal opportunity employers can be recognized by the **Equality Mark logo**. This logo can be used on all outgoing correspondence including recruitment, advertising and press statements. The NCPE also promotes certified organisations locally by highlighting their good practices, providing a model for other employers and a benchmark for job seekers. There are no application fees, and the provision of logos and promotion is also free of charge.

The NCPE Equality Mark certification is awarded for a period of two years, after which organisations wishing to retain the Equality Mark undergo a re-certification process. All organisations applying for the Equality Mark



Equality Mark and Equal Pay Certification awardees

Certification are supported by the NCPE in conducting the necessary assessments and identifying the most effective strategies for their specific needs.

The NCPE guides all organisations in implementing the necessary measures, such as the drafting of an **Equality Policy** and a **Sexual Harassment Policy**, including the setting up of an investigative procedure which is efficient and transparent and introducing, or improving, the availability of **family-friendly measures** for all employees.

The Equality Mark is not a purely administrative exercise and requires the commitment of the whole organisation to gender equality principles to ensure that the necessary measures are effectively implemented and are of benefit to all. Top management needs to demonstrate commitment to each of the standards outlined in the Equality Mark certification.

Interested organisations may apply for the certification by contacting the NCPE to discuss the organisation's current scenario and eligibility for the Equality Mark. The **Application Form** needs to be submitted duly completed, together with the requested documentation. Following review, feedback is provided and the organisation is assisted in carrying out the necessary changes that will put it in line with the certification criteria.

The last step of the certification process is an audit carried out by the NCPE at the organisation's premises.

An **Awarding Ceremony** for certified and re-certified organisations is held yearly during the NCPE Annual Conference. The list of certified organisations can be accessed from the NCPE's website.

Companies certified with the Equality Mark:

- implement an Equality Policy and a Sexual Harassment Policy, including internal reporting procedures for cases of discrimination and sexual harassment
- implement standard operating procedures for recruitment and employment that are based on the principles of equal opportunities
- provide incentives for women and men with caring responsibilities to remain employed or return to work, by offering family-friendly measures, such as reduced hours, telework and flexitime
- process fairly and transparently requests for family-friendly measures and keep a record of persons applying for such measures
- ensure equal pay for work of equal value
- ensure that job descriptions are gender inclusive, and roles assigned are free from gender stereotypes

- appoint a gender equality representative within the organisation or establish a gender equality committee responsible for acting as a point of reference on equality issues
- ensure equal opportunities in accessing training, staff development activities, news and other material
- specify those measures that the organisation undertakes to facilitate participation of employees with caring responsibilities (including those making use of family-friendly measures) should training or other activities need to take place outside the normal working hours or environment
- ensure that any goods and/or services supplied by the organisation are equally accessible to women and men

RE-CERTIFICATION

Following the two-year certification period, organisations that wish to retain their certification, will go through a re-certification process to ensure that the commitments taken at certification stage are still being followed.

As part of the re-certification process, the organisation is required to fill in two different questionnaires. The first one is filled in by the employer. A percentage of the organisation's employees are also required to attend a training session on gender equality and the Equality Mark certification, at which point they are asked to fill in the second questionnaire anonymously. The NCPE uses the responses gathered to verify that the organisation is upholding equality principles and areas for improvement are identified and brought to the attention of the company.

The NCPE notes with satisfaction that most organisations awarded the Equality Mark opt for re-certification and invite the NCPE to re-assess their context from a gender equality perspective.

Equality Mark Certifications in 2025				
Certified	1 st re-certification	2 nd re-certification	3 rd re-certification	4th re-certification
HH Operating Ltd H Operations	All Clean Services Ltd.	Alberta Fire & Security Equipment Ltd.	Directorate Corporate Services- Ministry for Justice and Reform of the Construction Sector	Adi Associates
Knights College	EPG Financial Services Ltd. EPG Solutions Ltd.	Catena Media	En-sure Ltd.	ADPRO Instruments
Malta Tourism Authority	Executive Group Ltd.	Eurobridge Shipping Services Ltd.	Grange Security Ltd.	Besedo Ltd.
	Michael Debono Ltd. Debono Group Holdings Ltd. Parts Supply Ltd. New Mobility Ltd Storage Systems Ltd.	Health Services Group Ltd Support Services Ltd. Healthmark Care Services Ltd	Office of the Superintendence of Public Health	Melita plc
	Jobsplus	Malta Financial Services Authority (MFSA)		MISCO International Ltd. MISCO Consulting Ltd.
	Security Service Malta Ltd.	People and Skin		
		Primary HealthCare		
		Protection Services Ltd		

THE EQUAL PAY CERTIFICATION

A core principle to achieving gender equality at the workplace is adhering to the principle of equal pay for work of equal value. Cognizant of this, the NCPE began developing an **Equal Pay Tool** in 2020 to help check equal pay for work of equal value between women and men. The Tool was initially created within the framework of an EU-funded project called 'Prepare the Ground for Economic Independence' (PGEI), which sought to address the gender pay gap as well as the gender pension gap.



Once the Tool was finalised and verified to provide accurate and easily interpretable results, it was launched in 2023 and subsequently integrated into the NCPE Equality Mark certification. Companies that already hold the Equality Mark and employ **at least 50 employees** now have the option to also apply for the **Equal Pay Certification**. To obtain the Equal Pay Certification, companies must make use of the Tool to check whether their company is upholding the principle of equal pay for work of equal value.

Organisations that are awarded the Equality Mark Certification and meet the eligibility criteria for the Equal Pay Certification, are contacted with all the necessary information should they wish to apply to make use of the Equal Pay Tool.

When applying to use the Tool, companies are required to input their human resources

data into an excel workbook. Data relating to employees is coded in such a manner that employees remain anonymous, and all data is treated with strict confidentiality by the NCPE.

Following analysis of the data inputted, processed by the Equal Pay Tool software, the NCPE provides a report with confidential information and guidance on the equal pay situation within the organisation.

An Equal Pay Certification is only awarded when the Equal Pay Tool indicates a **Low Risk** of non-compliance with the equal pay principle. The certification is valid for three years, during which the organisation can use the Equal Pay Certification logo in its adverts and other communications.

The NCPE offers confidential assistance on request to those organisations which obtain a result that shows a **Medium or High Risk** of non-compliance with the equal pay principle. This assistance provides a deeper understanding of the pay situation within the organisation, including potential flaws and unintended discrepancies.

It is important to recognise that the **principle of equal pay for work of equal value** applies not only when women and men do the same or similar work, but also in the more common case where their work differs. When women and men perform work that is different in content, involving different responsibilities, requiring different skills or qualifications, and is performed under different conditions - but is overall of equal value - they should receive the same compensation.

The **EU Pay Transparency Directive**, which has to be transposed into Maltese Law by June 2026, introduces several obligations, including reporting mechanisms, that aim to verify and ensure the upholding in practice of the principle of equal pay for work of equal value. In this context, the Equal Pay Tool also helps organisations to internally verify whether they are in line with the equal pay principle in the context of the Directive.

Since its launch, the NCPE has awarded the Equal Pay Certification to **four organisations**.

4. Building Knowledge and Networks

4.1 OUR CONFERENCES

NCPE WORK-LIFE BALANCE CONFERENCE 2025 – 9 JANUARY

The NCPE organised a Conference to discuss findings of its research study titled: *Perceptions and Attitudes of Women and Men in Malta towards Work-Life Balance: With a Specific Focus on Family Size*. This study is particularly relevant given Malta having the **lowest fertility rate** in the EU.



Parliamentary Secretary for Equality and Reforms, Hon. Rebecca Buttigieg, addressing the NCPE Work-Life Balance Conference



Shadow Minister for Equality, Hon. Graziella Attard Previ, addressing the NCPE Work-Life Balance Conference

The Conferences discussed how women and men can achieve a better balance between work and family life, particularly in care and family responsibilities, so as to support parents in having more children.

Prof Anna Borg from the Centre for Labour Studies at the University of Malta, who undertook the study, shared the findings of the NCPE's research, highlighting how sustained **work-family conflict** continues to impact the perceptions and attitudes towards having children.



Prof Anna Borg addressing the NCPE Work-Life Balance Conference

Findings revealed that, despite high employment rates for both genders, significant **disparities** persist in how work-family conflicts affect women and men, with mothers disproportionately bearing the brunt, resulting in a negative impact on their fertility intentions. The findings provided a critical foundation for policymakers, employers, and stakeholders to design holistic, family-friendly policies that balance professional and personal lives, benefiting families and the wider Maltese society.



Prof Godfrey Baldacchino addressing the NCPE Work-Life Balance Conference

Prof Godfrey Baldacchino from the Sociology Department at the University of Malta analysed the **economic implications** of these issues. He identified four main factors contributing to Malta's low fertility rate: the desired quality of life, the level of consumption considered satisfactory, the dominance of work as a cultural attribute, and the pursuit and maintenance of a career.



Workshop during the NCPE Work-Life Balance Conference

A panel of stakeholders discussed the current situation, the challenges and the way forward from the economic and sociological perspectives, such as the reconciliation of work with family responsibilities and its relation to the fertility rate.



NCPE staff during the Work-Life Balance Conference

NCPE INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY CONFERENCE 2025 – 6 MARCH

International Women's Day, observed annually on 8th March, provides an opportunity to recognise progress in empowering women across various fields while also advocating for continued efforts to achieve gender equality.

Following the response to the previous Conference held in January 2025 on work-life balance, which sparked nationwide debate, the NCPE broadened such discussion further. The Conference focused on how caregiving and family responsibilities impact **women's participation in high-level positions** in society.



NCPE Conference for International Women's Day



Parliamentary Secretary for Equality and Reforms, Hon. Rebecca Buttigieg, addressing the NCPE Women's Day Conference

NCPE Commissioner, Ms Renee Laiviera, said that women remain significantly **underrepresented** in decision-making positions. In Malta, only 29% of Members of Parliament, and just 17.5% of board members in largest listed companies are women. Meanwhile, data also reveals gender disparities in household and caregiving responsibilities. Women continue to shoulder the majority of unpaid care and family responsibilities, from household tasks to childcare and caring for other family members. As a result, many women tend to limit or even interrupt their careers, which may lead to fewer women in leadership roles.



NCPE Commissioner, Ms Renee Laiviera, presenting the EIGE Gender Equality Index during the Women's Day Conference



Prof Josann Cutajar addressing the NCPE Women's Day Conference

Ms Laiviera's presentation provided an overview of Malta's performance in the GEI 2024, which tracks progress across the EU in six key domains: work, money, knowledge, time, power, and health. While Malta performed strongly in the health domain, its lowest scores were recorded in time and power, highlighting persistent gender imbalances in leadership and caregiving responsibilities.

Prof JosAnn Cutajar, from the Faculty for Social Wellbeing Gender and Sexualities Department, University of Malta, analysed the relationship between gender disparities in **time use** and women's participation in leadership positions. She examined how these imbalances affect women's representation in decision-making roles across politics, the workplace and other sectors. Prof Cutajar also highlighted the importance of addressing societal norms and workplace policies that reinforce traditional gender roles, often hindering women's career progression.



Panel discussion during the NCPE Women's Day Conference

A panel of stakeholders discussed the **root causes** of gender inequalities in household responsibilities and examined the factors contributing to the underrepresentation of women in leadership roles, both in the workplace and in politics. The panel also addressed the role of employers in increasing the number of women in leadership positions and of political parties in fostering female politicians. Participants had the opportunity to engage in in-depth discussions on how to strengthen gender balance in leadership roles and promote equality between women and men in household responsibilities.

SKIN FINAL CONFERENCE – 25 JUNE

In June 2025, the NCPE and aditus foundation successfully concluded the EU-co-funded SKIN project with a Final Conference that presented the key **findings**, **outcomes** and **recommendations** from two years of research and engagement.

During the conference, persistent racial discrimination was highlighted and the NCPE reaffirmed its commitment to strengthening equality, inclusion and social cohesion through continued education, policy recommendations and collaborative action.

Hon. Ms Rebecca Buttigieg, Parliamentary Secretary for Reforms and Equality, emphasised that racism and discrimination undermine **societal values** and highlighted the launch of the Integration Strategy and Action Plan 2025–2030 to foster inclusion and social cohesion.

NCPE Commissioner, Ms Renee Laiviera, highlighted persistent discrimination against persons of **African descent** and **Muslim minorities** in Malta using EU-MIDIS II and



NCPE Manager (Projects), Ms Annalise Frantz, addressing the SKIN Final Conference



aditus Foundation Director, Dr Neil Falzon, addressing the SKIN Final Conference



NCPE Commission member, Mr Isaak Koroma, addressing the SKIN Final Conference



NCPE Commissioner, Ms Renee Laiviera, addressing the SKIN Final Conference



NCPE Manager (Research Analyst), Ms Amanda Catania, presenting the SKIN focus group findings and recommendations



SKIN panel discussion on anti-racism training

Eurobarometer data and underscored the NCPE's commitment to tackling inequality.

Ms Annalise Frantz, NCPE Manager – Projects, provided an overview of the project's activities, including awareness-raising campaigns, capacity-building, focus groups and training initiatives aimed at combating racism and discrimination.

Mr André Callus, NCPE Manager – Policy & Training, provided a synopsis of the training delivered which focused on building confidence to assert rights, report discrimination, and promoting inclusive environments.

Personal experiences of living in Malta as a person of African descent were shared by NCPE Commission Member, Mr Isaak Koroma.

Ms Amanda Catania, NCPE Manager – Research Analyst, presented insights from the project's focus groups on the lived experiences of people of African descent and Muslims in Malta.

The experiences and reflections of the interpreters who participated in the focus groups were shared during a second panel discussion highlighting how it felt to listen to the stories of others, exploring the emotional and social impact of migration and racism in Malta. The conversation also included their personal recommendations on how communities can respond to racism more effectively.

NCPE ANNUAL CONFERENCE 2025 – 10 SEPTEMBER

The NCPE organised its 2025 Annual Conference presenting an overview of the work carried out throughout 2024.

NCPE Commissioner, Ms Renee Laiviera, highlighted that 2024 was a special year for the NCPE as it celebrated **two decades** of dedicated work and commitment to foster equality. Ms Laiviera expounded on the NCPE's two main roles: investigation of cases of alleged discrimination and promotion of equal treatment through training, awareness campaigns, participation in traditional and social media, as well as research. She also referred to the widening of the NCPE's remit to promote,



NCPE Commissioner, Ms Renee Laiviera, addressing the NCPE Annual Conference



Parliamentary Secretary for Equality and Reforms, Hon. Rebecca Buttigieg, addressing the NCPE Annual Conference

analyse, monitor and support gender balance on the boards of listed companies, in line with the Women on Boards Directive.

During the conference, ten organisations were certified with the NCPE Equality Mark Certification for the first time for their commitment towards equality in the policies and practices at their workplace; 37 were recertified as a confirmation of this commitment. Moreover, the NCPE awarded the Equal Pay Certification to another company in recognition of its compliance with the principle of equal pay for work of equal value.

The second part of the Conference was introduced by Mr André Callus, NCPE Manager - Policy & Training, discussing Gender Equality and Masculinities. A panel discussion followed exploring diverse perspectives on **Masculinities**



Panel discussion on Masculinities in Maltese Society

in **Maltese Society**, including gendered expectations and the evolving role of men within the family, gender stereotypes in Maltese literature, masculinities and gender stereotypes on social media, as well as toxic masculinities.

TRANSFORM CONFERENCE – 13 NOVEMBER

The NCPE held a hybrid conference on 13th November 2025 entitled 'The meaning of work and the importance of ensuring equality: Bridging contemporary views with future vision'. The event brought together local and international participants, both in person and online, for a morning session focused on **equality and the future of work** within the context of the TRANSFORM project, of which the NCPE is a partner.

In total, 164 participants took part, representing 13 countries. In-person attendance included participants from Malta and France whilst online participants joined from Slovenia, Portugal, Belgium, Italy, Greece, Germany, Hungary, North Macedonia, Lithuania and Poland.

The event addressed equality and the future of work, highlighting increased male engagement in equality initiatives and the need to mainstream equality amid changing labour market conditions driven by technology and evolving work patterns. Key contributions outlined the TRANSFORM project's focus on technology's impact on



NCPE Commissioner, Ms Renee Laiviera, addressing the TRANSFORM Conference



Prof Anna Borg addressing the TRANSFORM Conference



Panel of speakers during the TRANSFORM Conference

jobs, skills, well-being, and equality, alongside national policy advances in Malta on gender equality, work-life balance, leadership diversity, and equal pay.

Speakers emphasised that **digitalisation** and **Artificial Intelligence** must not reinforce existing inequalities and reaffirmed commitments to fair and inclusive workplaces. Labour market data showed continued employment growth, a narrowing gender employment gap, and the

positive impact of long-term investments in childcare and family-friendly measures.

Discussions further identified future skills priorities, persistent risks of inequality, productivity challenges linked to skills gaps, and ongoing efforts by national institutions to promote inclusive lifelong learning, workforce adaptability, and support for vulnerable jobseekers.

4.2 FORA AND NETWORKS

The NCPE is a member of various networks, committees and boards, and participates in their respective events.

EUROPEAN NETWORK OF EQUALITY BODIES (EQUINET)

Equinet is the European Network of Equality Bodies, which are public institutions fighting discrimination at national level. Through Equinet, members are able to share and exchange their expertise at European level. The Network ensures that information and knowledge flows as efficiently as possible between members, enabling each equality body to learn from the successes and challenges encountered by the other's in implementing their mandates at the national level.

Equinet promotes equality in Europe by supporting equality bodies to be independent and effective as valuable catalysts for more equal societies.

The NCPE actively participated in Equinet's events throughout 2025 as in previous years.



NCPE Commissioner, Ms Renee Laiviera, participating in an Equinet meeting

EU ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES BETWEEN WOMEN AND MEN

The NCPE Commissioner is a member of the EU Advisory Committee on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men, a body assisting the European Commission in formulating and implementing the European Union work, aimed at promoting equality between women and men.

Created in 1981 by the European Commission, the Advisory Committee delivers opinions to the Commission on issues of relevance to the promotion of gender equality in the EU.

It comprises representatives of EU member states, social partners at EU level and NGOs, fostering ongoing exchanges of experiences, policies and practices between EU MS and the relevant stakeholders.

EUROPEAN INSTITUTE FOR GENDER EQUALITY (EIGE) EXPERTS' FORUM

The Experts' Forum is EIGE's advisory body. Its primary function is to provide expert knowledge in the field of gender equality.

It is composed of members from competent bodies specialised in gender equality from every EU Member State. Each country designates both a member and an alternate, and there are two members designated by the European Parliament, as well as three members designated by the European Commission and representing interested parties at the European level.

The NCPE Commissioner is a member of the EIGE Experts' Forum.



EUROPEAN COMMISSION AGAINST RACISM AND INTOLERANCE (ECRI)

ECRI is a Council of Europe human rights body composed of independent experts. This body monitors racism, xenophobia, antisemitism, intolerance and discrimination on grounds such as race, national/ethnic origin, colour, citizenship, religion and language. It prepares

country reports on developments and issues recommendations to States under review.

The NCPE's Commissioner is a member of the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI) and regularly participates in its work.

COMMITTEES AND BOARDS

In 2025, NCPE officers sat on a number of Committees to promote equality between men and women, equal opportunities and non-discrimination, that relate to a horizontal priority across all these programmes.

- **Women, Peace and Security (WPS) Oversight Committee:** The Committee is tasked with monitoring and evaluating the implementation of Malta's Action Plan and seeks to implement the United Nations Security Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security. At the end of 2025, Malta's 2nd National Action Plan (NAP) on Women, Peace and Security (WPS), covering the years 2025-2030 was launched. The NCPE is the lead entity on various measures within this NAP including the promotion of the WPS Agenda, and the provision of training sessions to WPS stakeholders.
- **Interreg Italia-Malta Executive Committee:** The Interreg Italia-Malta is a cross-border Programme which covers the Maltese Islands and several regions in Sicily. This Programme aims to reinforce sustainable growth at the cross-border level, with a particular focus on the Research and Innovation sectors. It fosters the competitiveness of small and medium-sized enterprises, protects the environment as well as promotes actions which mitigate the effects of climate change, whilst also addressing the area's natural and anthropic risks. One of the principles of the Programme is "equality between men and women and non-discrimination".
- As part of the Executive Committee of this Programme, the NCPE gives feedback on the equal opportunities section of the project proposal. The NCPE also sits on the programme's Monitoring Committee.

- The European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF) and the European Maritime Fisheries and Aquaculture Fund (EMFAF): The EMFF and EMFAF contribute to realising the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP) objectives, which specifically consist of ensuring the conservation and sustainable use of marine resources. The NCPE sits on the Monitoring Committee that assesses progress in reaching the objectives of the operational programme for Malta, and analyses and approves the selection criteria for the financed operations. The NCPE's role is to give horizontal feedback on issues related to equality.
- The Rural Development Programme for Malta under the European Agricultural fund for Rural Development has the objective of reducing economic and social disparities within the European Economic Area. The NCPE sits on the programme's Monitoring Committee and provides an equality perspective.
- PPCD - Operational Programme I and Operational Programme II: The NCPE is a member of the programme's Monitoring Committee whose role is to monitor the effectiveness and quality of the implementation of the Operational Programme, in accordance with Articles 49 and 110 of Regulation (EU) 1303/2013. The NCPE provides input to the programme from an equality perspective.
- Asylum, Migration, Integration Fund (AMIF): The AMIF is a mechanism to enhance, through financial assistance, effective management of migration flows to the EU, in particular by sharing responsibility between Member States and strengthening cooperation with third countries. In Malta, the programme focuses on asylum and reception, integration, return and solidarity. The NCPE sits on the programme's Monitoring Committee.
- Internal Security Fund (ISF): ISF provides an opportunity for Malta to invest in a number of areas, including the exchange of information, cross border cooperation and supporting resilience and protection against serious and organised crime, with the ultimate aim of improving the overall protection of citizens and public spaces, maintain security, and facilitate the collection of sensitive data. The NCPE sits on the Fund's Monitoring Committee.
- Border Management and Visa Instrument Programme (BMVI): BMVI contributes towards strengthening border surveillance at external borders whilst also safeguarding the free movement of persons within the Union, through effective control mechanisms supporting a common visa policy. Investments under this Programme aim to facilitate communication of sensitive data across EU channels as well as improve efficiency and deployment of resources for immediate action in emergency situations. The NCPE sits on the programme's Monitoring Committee.



5. Financial Overview

During the financial year 2025, the NCPE received government funding amounting to €900,000 (2024 – €750,000). NCPE received other government funding of €7,422 (2024 - €6,640) which were utilised to purchase assets. With respect to the EU-funded projects, NCPE received funding of €81,883 (2024 - €79,960). Other income amounted to €15,327. Total recurrent cost amounted to €732,159 (2024 – €650,432) thereby registering a surplus of €272,473 for the year ending 31st December 2025. Staff Costs and Honoraria increased to €555,582 (2024 – €508,771) representing 76% of the total costs. Administrative costs amounted to €176,577 (2024 – €141,661). As in previous years, these costs are being kept to a minimum. The main administrative costs are listed hereunder:

The NCPE focuses on the investigation of complaints as per Chapter 456 of the Laws of Malta as well as the promotion of equality and research in this context. The NCPE regularly submits a number of proposals for EU Funding so as to be in a position to further its research, training and awareness-raising activities. During 2025, the NCPE continued with the implementation of the project ‘*Strengthening Knowledge on*

Expenditure	2025 in EUR
Expenses on EU-funded projects	48,300
Depreciation	7,422
Telecommunication expenses	1,456
Office related costs	15,365
Transport	1,294
Professional fees	35,311
Bank charges	880
Advertising expenses	16,720
Research expenses	450
Training	550
Other	48,829

Integration and Non-Discrimination’ (SKIN), which commenced in November 2022. This project is part-financed by the Citizens, Equality, Rights and Values Programme (CERV) 2021-2027. The total expenditure of the project in 2025 amounted to €48,300.

Looking Ahead

By June 2026, Malta is expected to transpose into national law the two EU Directives on **standards for equality bodies**. These Directives establish minimum requirements relating to independence, powers, and resources across EU Member States, with the aim of strengthening the capacity of equality bodies to combat discrimination and promote equality more effectively. In Malta's case, this process is being undertaken through the introduction of new legislation that will reinforce the current role of the NCPE, while also establishing it as a **national human rights institution** answerable to Parliament, in line with the Paris Principles.

The envisaged strengthening of the NCPE's mandate, powers, and institutional structure is expected to bring about significant changes to the entity. In 2026, the NCPE will endeavour to enhance its knowledge base and human resource capacity to ensure a smooth and effective **transition** into a dual-function institution responsible for both equality and human rights. At the same time, awareness-raising efforts will be stepped up so that the public better understands the Commission's expanded role.

Alongside this transition, the NCPE will continue to fulfil its existing functions. It will maintain its role in receiving and independently **investigating complaints** of discrimination,

harassment, and sexual harassment. The Commissioner will continue to issue Opinions, outlining appropriate remedies and, where necessary, proposing structural changes to address systemic issues.

Reviewing national, EU, and international policies, strategies, and legislation from an equality perspective will continue to be part of its core work. Its input and **recommendations** will focus on identifying necessary amendments and inclusions to ensure that measures effectively address inequalities and contribute to a more equitable society. Efforts will also be strengthened to support public administration in gender mainstreaming Government actions, including through targeted training and proposals to improve the reporting process.

Media engagement will remain a key tool in the NCPE's outreach. Regular participation in television and radio programmes will continue, alongside ongoing updates across its social media platforms. **Promotional campaigns** highlighting the NCPE's remit and services, as well as challenging gender stereotypes, are planned for 2026. This audio-visual initiative aims to raise public awareness, increase visibility, and inform the public about the support available in the field of equality and non-discrimination. It will also encourage the reporting of alleged cases

of discrimination, helping to strengthen public understanding of equality rights.

Certification and re-certification of companies under the NCPE **Equality Mark** will continue in 2026. The NCPE will support organisations in improving their internal policies and procedures to promote equality between women and men, as well as individuals with family responsibilities. Confidential guidance and assistance will also continue to be provided to companies making use of the Equal Pay Tool.

In the area of equal pay for work of equal value, the NCPE will be assigned additional roles in line with the **Pay Transparency Directive**, whose transposition is envisaged by June 2026. These will include requesting information on behalf of workers, seeking data on the gender pay gap, and participating in joint pay assessments where unequal pay for work of equal value is identified.

In 2026, the NCPE aims to publish a **research study** analysing the manifestation of age discrimination in the workplace across the different age cohorts. The study will investigate the prevalence and effects of age discrimination, explore how employees respond to such experiences, and formulate recommendations to prevent and effectively address age discrimination within workplaces.

The EU-funded TRANSFORM project, being implemented in collaboration with eight partner countries, will focus on consolidating insights and shaping forward-looking responses to **future workforce challenges**. A series of planned activities will foster dialogue on human-centred work environments, skills development, and equality in a changing labour market. The project will culminate in a 'Symposium on Knowledge Sharing and Insights into the Future of the

Human Workforce', ensuring that evidence, best practices, and recommendations are shared to support inclusive and sustainable workforce development across Europe.

Moreover, the Grant Agreement for the EU-funded project 'SSD – Support for Social Dialogue in the Age of Platform Work and Flexible Employment', led by the GWU, with the NCPE as partner, is expected to be formalised in 2026. The project will be implemented in collaboration with twelve partner organisations across Malta, Poland, Croatia, Slovakia, Italy, Belgium, and Montenegro. It aims to strengthen **social dialogue** in response to the growth of non-standard, platform-based, and flexible forms of work, particularly where traditional systems face structural and legal challenges. Through digital tools, training, and cross-border cooperation, the project will support more effective dialogue and policy development.

2026 will be an important year for the NCPE, bringing both change and continuity. While preparations will be underway for its expanded role, possibly reflected in a new name that captures both its equality and human rights mandates, the Commission will remain committed to carrying out its core work in addressing discrimination and promoting equality. This transition provides an opportunity to strengthen its impact, both in supporting individuals and in contributing to fairer policies and practices. Throughout the year, the NCPE will work towards becoming a stronger and more effective institution, while ensuring that equality and human rights remain at the centre of Malta's social and policy landscape.



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