NCPE calls for an Equality Impact Assessment before measures targeting TCNs come into force

The National Commission for the Promotion of Equality (NCPE), as Malta's equality body, calls for an Equality Impact Assessment before the measures targeting third-country nationals (TCNs) come into force. Several of these measures have the potential to increase inequality among vulnerable groups within the NCPE's remit, such as women and persons from minority ethnic groups.

An Equality Impact Assessment scientifically assesses the economic, social and cultural impacts of proposed measures on different social groups through research, consultation and evaluation, with the aim of ensuring that such measures do not have unintended negative consequences for any group or for the country as a whole.

While not all foreign workers in Malta are in situations of vulnerability, TCNs are among the groups experiencing the lowest incomes and greatest levels of precarity. When this situation intersects with other social identities that heighten the risk of discrimination and inequalities - such as gender, family responsibilities, and ethnic origin - vulnerability can easily be created or exacerbated.

Thus, measures that impose additional financial burdens on foreign workers, rather than on those profiting from their work, will most severely affect the most vulnerable among them. For instance, the removal of free childcare could disproportionately impact women, who are more likely to shoulder family responsibilities, while the increase in permit fees for changing employment could make it harder for workers who need to leave their jobs and find new employment due to gender-based violence or racism.

In view of the above, the NCPE calls on the Government to carry out an Equality Impact Assessment of the announced measures before they come into force, in order to avoid exacerbating existing inequalities and to ensure social justice, a competitive economy, and a cohesive society.

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