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

Malta in the Gender Equality Index 2026

Malta has registered substantial progress towards greater gender equality in recent years. According to the Gender Equality Index (GEI) 2026, published by the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE), Malta scored **59.6 points out of 100**, representing an increase of 0.9 points since 2025 and 9.8 points since 2020.

While this reflects continued progress, Malta's score remains below the EU average. Malta also dropped from 16th to 17th place among EU Member States, with its score standing 4.9 points below the EU average of 64.5 points. This highlights the need for further efforts to address inequalities between women and men.

The GEI, first introduced in 2013, is an important tool for monitoring progress towards gender equality across the EU. The 2026 edition is the second to use the revised methodology introduced in 2025. The Index measures gender equality across six key domains: work, money, knowledge, time, power and health. Scores range from 0 to 100, with 0 representing complete gender inequality and 100 representing full gender equality.

Malta's strongest performance was recorded in the **domain of work**, where it ranked 3rd in the EU, scoring 77.6 points compared to the EU average of 70.7 points. Nevertheless, despite Malta's high employment rates, a wide gender gap remains, with the full-time equivalent employment rate standing at 53% for women and 71% for men.

Malta also ranked 3rd in the **domain of health**, scoring 89.1 points, above the EU average of 86.4 points. 76% of women and 82% of men in Malta consider their health to be good or very good, both figures among the highest in the EU.

In the **domain of knowledge**, Malta scored 58.9 points, slightly above the EU average of 57.3 points. However, gender differences remain in educational choices, with women accounting for only 33% of graduates in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM).

Despite these results, significant challenges remain. In the **domain of money**, Malta scored 72.9, ranking 21st in the EU, with a wide gender pension gap (37%); women in couples earn 73% of their partner's income; and the risk of poverty is also high among employed people in single-adult or single-parent households, affecting 22% of women and 31% of men.

Moreover, Malta's lowest score was recorded in the **domain of power**, with 27.2 points, down from 28.1 points in 2025. Women remain underrepresented in decision-making positions, accounting for 20% of ministers, 29% of parliamentary seats and just 17% of board members of Malta's largest listed companies.

Inequalities are also evident in the **domain of time**, where Malta maintained its score of 60.6 points. Unpaid care and household responsibilities continue to fall mainly on women. In fact, 37% of women spend more than 35 hours per week caring for young children, compared to 14% of men. Furthermore, 52% of women carry out household chores daily, compared to 25% of men. These differences can limit women's opportunities for employment, career progression and leisure.

The Index also highlights the ongoing concern of **violence against women**. In Malta, 24% of women have experienced physical and/or sexual violence since the age of 15, lower than the EU average of 31%. Cyberbullying remains a concern, with 17% of girls aged 13 reporting such experiences, compared to 14% of boys. By the age of 15, this figure stands at 13% for both girls and boys. Furthermore, 6% of women in Malta who have ever worked have experienced sexual harassment in the workplace through social media or messaging applications. Continued efforts are thus needed to prevent violence and harassment and ensure safer environments, both online and offline.

The GEI 2026 also highlights the importance of **parental leave** in promoting gender equality and supporting families. In Malta, 23% of employed women and 26% of employed men are not eligible for statutory parental leave, due to unmet employment conditions or self-employment.

The NCPE notes that, while Malta has made progress towards gender equality, the findings demonstrate that inequalities persist across several areas. The NCPE reiterates the importance of coordinated efforts to address segregation in the education and the labour market, strengthen women's representation in leadership and decision-making, promote a more equal sharing of care responsibilities and ensure equal opportunities for women and men.

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