

National Commission Persons with Disability

ANNUAL REPORT – 2004

The National Commission Persons with Disability commits itself to render Maltese society inclusive so that persons with disability reach their plenitude as persons who enjoy high quality of life by means of equal opportunities in all sections of society. In order to implement this commitment, KNPD engages itself so that society eliminates all forms of direct or indirect discrimination against persons with disability or their families while providing them with the necessary help and support.

Chapter 1

Introduction

1. Setting up of KNPD

The National Commission Persons with Disability (KNPD) was set up for the first time on the 3rd November 1987 when the then Minister for Social Policy made a parliamentary statement and appointed the first members of this Commission. On the 10th February 2000 KNPD was officially constituted according to Act No. 1 of the year 2000, the Equal Opportunities (Persons with Disability) Act. This same law established the aims of KNPD.

2. Aims

The aims of KNPD are to:

- identify, establish and update all national policies directly or indirectly related to disability issues;
- identify the needs of persons with disability, their families and voluntary bodies working in the field of disability and to take all necessary steps or propose appropriate measures in order to cater for such needs as much as possible;
- ensure that all Government programmes concerning the affairs and interests of persons with disability, their families and voluntary bodies working in the field of disability, are implemented in accordance with national policies for disability issues;
- ensure the necessary co-ordination between all Government departments and agencies in implementing measures, services or initiatives proposed by Government or proposed by KNPD from time to time;
- keep direct and continuous contact with local and foreign bodies working in the field of disability issues, and with other groups, agencies or individuals according as the need arises;

- monitor the provision of services offered by Government or its agencies or by any other person or group of persons, where the clients of such services are persons with disability;
- work towards the elimination of discrimination against people with disability;
- carry out general investigations with a view to determining whether the provisions of this Act are being complied with;
- investigate such complaints, as may be made to them, of failure to comply with any provision of this Act in an individual case and, where it seems appropriate, conciliate in relation to such complaints;
- inquire into, and make determinations on, matters referred to it by the Minister;
- provide, where and as appropriate, assistance, including legal and financial assistance, to persons with disabilities in enforcing their rights under this Act;
- keep under review the working of this Act and, when deemed fit by KNPD or so required by the Minister, draw up and submit to the Minister proposals for amendments to same;
- examine laws, and (when requested to do so by the Minister) propose laws, for the purpose of ascertaining whether the laws or proposed laws are or would be, inconsistent with or contrary to the objects of this Act, and to report to the Minister the results of any such examination;
- provide all such services that may be necessary or required for KNPD to attain its objectives;
- collate, analyse and publish statistics related to the disability sector which, among others, indicates the national level achieved in inclusive policy.

3. The Period of this Annual Report

This report covers the year 2004 and is being drawn up according to Article 30 of the Equal Opportunities (Persons with Disability) Act.

4. The Structure of the National Commission Persons with Disability

4.1 The members of KNPD occupy their post for two years. In October 2004 the term of the members of KNPD came to an end and the Prime Minister selected a new commission. This year, KNPD was composed as shown in Table number 1.

Composition of KNPD 2004		Table Number 1
Name	Status	
Mr Joseph M. Camilleri ^(a)	Chairman	
Dr Anthony Charles ^(a)	Vice-Chairman, Voluntary Sector	
Mr Jesmond Schembri ^(b)	Ministry of the Family and Social Solidarity	
Mr Edgar Galea Curmi ^(c)	Ministry of Social Policy	
Ms Myriam Aquilina	Ministry of Education	
Dr Marvic Sammut	Ministry of Health	
Mr Alfred Camilleri	Ministry of Finance and Economic Services	
Mr Noel Formosa	Ministry of Gozo	
Ms Sarah Cuschieri ^(d)	Local Councils Association	
Ms Josette Pisani ^{(e) (f)}	Local Councils Association	
Dr. Marie Alexander	University of Malta	
Fr. Martin Micallef	Archdiocese of Malta	
Mr. Karl Borg ^(a)	Voluntary Sector	
Ms Rita Borg ^(a)	Voluntary Sector	
Mr. Wenzu Dalli ^(a)	Voluntary Sector	
Ms Marthese Mugliette ^(f)	Voluntary Sector	
Ms Pam Muscat ^(f)	Voluntary Sector	
Mr John Peel ^{(f) (g)}	Voluntary Sector	
Mr Fred Bezzina	Secretary	

^(a) These people are persons with disability in accordance with article 21 of the Equal Opportunities (Persons with Disability) Act.

^(b) Mr Jesmond Schembri became a member of KNPD in May 2004.

^(c) Mr. Galea Curmi was a member of KNPD till October 2004.

^(d) Ms Sarah Cuschieri became a member of KNPD in October 2004.

^(e) Ms Josette Pisani was a member of KNPD till October 2004.

^(f) These persons are family members of persons with disability in accordance with article 21 of the Equal Opportunities (Persons with Disability) Act.

^(g) Mr Peel did not accept to remain a member of KNPD as from October 2004.

4.2 Till October, KNPD also had an Executive body which was composed of Mr. Joe Camilleri, Chairman, Mr. Fred Bezzina, Executive Director of the Secretariat, who also performs the function of Secretary of KNPD and of the Executive, Mr Jesmond Schembri, a representative of the Ministry of the Family and Social Solidarity, Ms Miriam Aquilina, representing the Ministry of Education, Fr Martin Micallef, representing the Archdiocese of Malta, Mr John Peel, representing the Federation of Organisations for Persons with Disability and Dr. Anthony Charles. The new Executive board has not been appointed yet.

4.3 During this year, KNPD held 9 meetings, eight times with the whole Commission being present and once with only the Executive.

4.4 During the year 2004, the Secretariat of KNPD published the **bimonthly report** for the Ministry for Social Policy and for the members of KNPD and the general public. This report is published on the KNPD website.

5. The Secretariat of KNPD

5.1 KNPD presented its Annual Report for the year 2003 during a press conference held in February 2003. This report was distributed among all those who work in this sector and can be obtained from KNPD, in Maltese or in English, audio version, large print, or from the website of KNPD.

5.2 At the moment, there are sixteen persons in the KNPD Secretariat of KNPD working full-time and three working part-time. Ten of these have a disability. The Secretariat offers equal opportunities of work at all levels.

5.3 This year, KNPD and the Union Haddiema Maghqudin agreed on the signing of the third collective agreement for the Secretariat employees. This agreement was approved by the Collective Bargaining Unit of the Ministry of Finance and was officially signed during the Persons with Disability Week.

5.4 KNPD hired the services of thirteen professionals so as to be able to function more effectively. This included professional services about:

- (a) the Equal Opportunities Act;
- (b) vetting of various applications;
- (c) reports and home visits for the Special Apparatus Fund;
- (d) vetting by architects of applications for development made to MEPA;
- (e) its financial accounts;
- (f) data protection.

5.5 KNPD pursued a training programme for its employees. In this respect, this year two initiatives were taken: one related to Data Protection and another to Communication with Clients, including those with disability.

6. Services of KNPD

6.1 The services given by KNPD to persons with disability and their families are the following:

- The National Register of Persons with Disability;
- The Special Identity Card;
- Investigation of Complaints of Discrimination;
- The Special Apparatus Fund;
- The Resource Centre;
- Courses on Disability Issues;
- The PEKTUR Programme;
- Service for Persons with Disability with Challenging Behaviour.

6.2 KNPD makes recommendations to the departments concerned regarding these benefits:

- The vetting of applications for development to MEPA;
- The exemption from customs duty on vehicles to the Ministry of Finance;
- The exemption from payment of road licences to the Testing and Licensing Directorate;
- The Blue Sticker to the Commissioner of Police;
- Work Permits for Personal Assistants to the Department of Citizenship;
- The Review of Decisions concerning Reserved Parking to the Transport Authority.

6.3 Detailed reports of these services are given in this report in the respective sections.

Chapter 2

Action Plan

1. The World Action Programme for Persons with Disability

KNPD has to conform to the Equal Opportunities (Persons with Disability) Act. Moreover, KNPD, as it has done in the past, has continued to follow the recommendations and proposals established by the United Nations as a model and recommended to all governments in the World Action Programme for Persons with Disability issued in 1983. This report is modelled on this programme. At the end of 1993 the United Nations also published the Standard Regulations for Equal Opportunities for Persons with Disability. This document complements and continues to develop the World Action Programme. Consequently, during this period, KNPD also kept these Standard Regulations as an important reference in the execution of its work.

2. Maltese Council for Economic and Social Development (MCESD)

In order to ensure that the persons with disability sector is an integral part of Malta's economic and social development, the Government established that KNPD would form part of the Civil Council of the Maltese Council for Economic and Social Development. KNPD's Chairman, Mr. Joe Camilleri, is KNPD's representative in this Committee.

3. The National Register of Persons with Disability

2.1 During this period KNPD continued to work on the national survey that it initiated in 1992 by:

- (a) continuing to input information in computers;
- (b) giving statistical information requested by organisations or individuals;
- (c) sending relevant information to persons with disability included in this register.

3.2 The statistics about this Register for the year 2004 can be seen in Table no. 2.

STATISTICS ABOUT THE REGISTER	Table Number 2	
	2003	2004
New persons with disability who answered the questionnaire	832	783
Registered persons with disability who updated the questionnaire	353	344
Questionnaires removed from the Register	299	940
Total of persons with disability in the Register	8026	7869

3.3 There was a significant number of persons who were removed from the Register after KNPD conducted a comprehensive exercise to remove registered persons who had died over the years.

3.4 KNPD receives various demands from different entities, like organisations for persons with disability, local councils, parish priests, university students, etc., to make use of this information. KNPD is strictly bound with confidentiality and, therefore, cannot divulge this information. However, KNPD is committed to help and thus offers to send the information itself provided that those who want to use this service supply the material to be sent and pay for the postage fees. During the year 2004, KNPD provided this service to ten different entities or individuals.

Chapter 3

REHABILITATION

1. New Support Services for Persons with Challenging Behaviour

In December of this year, KNPD began a new service that had been on KNPD's agenda for a long time. One of KNPD's priorities for the last ten years has been the need of a holistic service for persons with disability with challenging behaviour. In order to commence this service, KNPD hired the services of Ms Forough Hessabi M.A (Psych), Ed. S., educational specialist with several years of experience in various countries, especially in Canada and the US.

The new service is aimed for those who have challenging behaviour, their families and those who work with them in various sectors. It will consist of direct training, consultation and individual therapy sessions.

2. Special Apparatus Fund

2.1 During this period, the Special Apparatus Fund offered financial assistance and advice with regard to assistance services aimed at helping persons with disability live a more independent life. The general statistics about this service are shown in Table number 3.

SPECIAL HELP SERVICE	Table Number 3	
	2003	2004
▪ New Applications	279	240
▪ On the waiting list	83	5
▪ Did not qualify	-	3
▪ Pending	3	2
▪ Persons who benefited from the service	163	206
▪ Returned apparatus given to other applicants	4	14
▪ Returned apparatus	6	13
▪ Total sum of grants	Lm60,160	Lm65,053*

*This sum exceeds the allocated sum because a number of applications are not pursued.

2.2 An analysis of this service according to the age of the beneficiaries and according to the apparatus supplied can be found in Tables number 3, 4 and 5.

2.3 This year, KNPD continued to help by subsidising 50% of the price up to a maximum of Lm500. This means that KNPD subsidises 50% of the price of objects costing less than Lm 1000 and it gives Lm500 for objects costing more than Lm1000. KNPD has helped more people (an increase of 26%) and practically eliminated the waiting list (there are only five left).

Special Apparatus Fund		Table number 4
Age	Number	Percentage
0-5	9	4
6-16	44	21
17-30	31	15
31-60	49	24
61+	73	35
Total	206	100

Special Apparatus Fund		Table number 5
Apparatus	Number	Percentage
Wheelchairs & Walking Aids	80	35
Seating & Bedding	74	32
Personal Hygiene	32	14
Hearing Aids	26	11
Lifting Aids	12	5
Others	6	3
Total	230*	100
* The total is bigger than that of Table number 4 because there are applicants who benefit from more than one type of apparatus.		

2.4 This year KNPД used the full time services of Ms Vicky Sciberras, who is an occupational therapist and a person with disability managing this service. She is seconded with KNPД from the Health Division.

2.5 This service continued to work more closely with the Community Chest Fund:

- (a) The President of Malta, His Excellency Dr. E. Fenech Adami, asked KNPД to be represented in the administration board of the Fund. Thus, Mr. Joe Camilleri, chairman of KNPД, started to attend the meetings of the Board.
- (b) Persons who have already benefited financially from this service can apply for more financial assistance from this fund. Very often, such a request is met.
- (c) KNPД, together with the Foundation for Informatics Accessibility (FITA) and the Community Chest Fund have continued to accept applications to the Fund for financial assistance for the purpose of buying computers. Several persons with disability have benefited from this agreement.

2.6 This year the service updated the list of agents in Malta that sell products needed by persons with disability to live a more independent life. This list can be obtained from the offices of KNPД or from KNPД's website.

2.7 This year KNPД started working to establish a Wheelchair and Seating Clinic within the Ministry of Health aimed at offering professional advice regarding apparatus related to mobility. The Special Apparatus Fund, conducted a study, with the collaboration of other therapists working in government hospitals, about the qualitative and quantitative needs of this clinic. KNPД has already held talks with the Health Division in this regard.

3. Hearing Aids from St Luke's Hospital

KNPD received a complaint from the National Deaf People Association that deaf students had to wait for several months to obtain hearing aids from St Luke's Hospital. KNPD intervened and the problem has now been solved.

4. VAT Refunds

3.1 KNPD continued to refund VAT on these objects:

- (a) computers and computer accessories only in those cases in which the person has not benefited from a Lm500 grant by the Community Chest Fund;
- (b) batteries for wheelchairs.

3.2 Table 6 shows the statistics relevant to this benefit:

REFUNDS OF VAT	Table Number 6	
	2003	2004
Refund of the VAT tax	Lm2954	Lm1233
Number of people who benefited	41	26
Average VAT refund	Lm72	Lm47

Chapter 4

Equal Opportunities

1. Equal Opportunities (Persons with Disability) Act

1.1 One of KNPD's main aims is to ensure that the Equal Opportunities (Persons with Disability) Act is observed. On the occasion of the fourth anniversary since the enactment of this law, KNPD published the report of the fourth year (October 2003-October 2004) of its performance in relation to this law. This report was presented to the public during a press conference in the presence of the Hon Dolores Cristina, Minister for Family and Social Solidarity, and the Hon Marie Louis Coleiro, chief spokesperson of the Opposition in this sector.

1.2. During this year, KNPD continued to receive complaints about discrimination as seen in Table number 7:

Investigation about Complaints of Discrimination				Table number 7	
Complaints	New 2004	Total	Closed 2004	Total Closed	Open 2005
Work	11	42	6	37	5 (5%)
Education	17	61	9	41	21 (20%)
Services	23	67	9	47	17 (16%)
Accessibility	22	134	11	85	54 (51%)
Homes	6	13	0	3	6 (6%)
Insurance	2	7	1	5	3 (3%)
TOTAL	81	324	36	218	106

Reasonable Accommodation Board (Equal Opportunities Act)		Table number 8
	2003	2004
Requests for Exemption	16	53
Reasonable Subject to Conditions	9(56%)	28(53%)
Not Reasonable	5(31%)	23(43%)
Pending	2(13%)	2(4%)

1.3.1. This year, the Reasonable Accommodation Board continued its work in accordance with the Equal Opportunities (Persons with Disability) Act. The Board's work is illustrated in Table number 8.

1.3.2. The high increase in the number of cases examined by this Board is due to the fact that the Board began functioning in the middle of 2003 and thus the statistics for 2003 only cover half a year.

1.4 KNPD's efforts in this sector for the year 2004 can be classified in the following way:

- a) Closed cases
- b) Cases in which a temporary agreement was reached;

- c) Pending court cases;
- d) Cases under discussion.

1.4.1 Closed Cases

The important cases closed in 2004 were the following:

- *Tax Rebate for Parents of Students with Disability in Independent Schools;*
KNPD requested a rebate because these parents were paying for the services of a facilitator needed by their children because of their disability. In the last budget, the Government agreed to give a rebate on a maximum of Lm4,000 a year.

- *Electronic Banking Services*

KNPD and FITA complained that the electronic services of Bank of Valletta and HSBC were not accessible enough to persons with visual impairment. After some discussions between the parties, a solution was found and these services are now accessible.

- *Access to the Entry to the Ministry of Interior Affairs (now the Ministry for Competition)*

This ministry implemented the Arbitration Centre's decision and thus the case is now closed.

- *Accessibility of the Parish Churches of Qawra and Cospicua*

After long discussions, the recently built Qawra Parish Church reached a high and acceptable level of accessibility and the case is now closed. The Cospicua Parish Church now has an accessible entrance after the building of ramps by the Committee for the Rehabilitation of Cottonera with the strong support of the Ministry for Resources and Infrastructure and of the Chaplain.

- *Mamma Mia Restaurant*

The case was closed after the restaurant changed premises to a completely accessible one.

1.4.2 Temporary agreements

- *Government Employees with Light Duties*

KNPD complained that a circular about these employees was discriminatory because they could not be promoted to higher grades. An agreement was reached to make an analysis of the employees with light duties so as to establish what has to be done.

- *Accessibility in Government Schools*

KNPD has an agreement about a programme of the Foundation for Tomorrow's Schools about the accessibility of Government Schools. The programme is not being followed due to the Foundation's administrative problems. KNPD will continue to make sure that students with physical disability have the environment they need. The programme will then be pursued in order to ensure that schools are accessible to students and workers with physical disability.

- *Riviera Hotel & Phoenicia Hotel*

KNPD reached an agreement with Riviera Hotel for the latter to be made accessible to everyone. Part of this agreement has already been implemented while the rest will be completed according to the agreement.

On the other hand, KNPD is still waiting for the temporary agreement with the Phoenicia Hotel to be implemented. Unless this happens, KNPD will have to institute legal proceedings against this hotel.

- *Parish Churches*

KNPD has a temporary agreement about the entrances to the Parish Church of Mosta and the Mdina Cathedral.

1.4.3 Court Cases

KNPD has instituted proceedings against:

- *The University of Malta regarding Student House.*

This case ended up in Court after KNPD had presented a judicial protest. The Court ordered the University to install a platform lift because of the University's delay in dealing with the problem and because the installation would not be an unreasonable expense. The University appealed against this sentence and discussions are now being held for an out of court settlement.

KNPD considers this judgment to be historic in the enforcement of the Equal Opportunities (Persons with Disability) Act. Moreover, this judgment was given in a relatively short time.

- *Michele Peresso Ltd regarding the Accessibility to the Building from which Equipment for Persons with Disability is Sold*

- *Invicta regarding to Judicial Taxes of the Case Instituted Against them by KNPD*

- *SBT about Telephone/SMS Accessibility for Deaf Persons*

1.4.4 Complaints which are still under Discussion

- Accessibility to the top floor of the Presidential Palace;
- Accessibility to the Health Centre in Gzira;
- Accessibility to sanitary services at St. Luke's Hospital;
- Accessibility to the entrance of the Parish Churches in Gharb and Ghasri;
- Accessibility to the entrance of the Regional Tribunal in Qormi, and Fgura;
- Insurance of persons who have diabetes;
- Accessibility to police stations;
- Distribution of medicine in schools;
- Facilitators;
- Rental or purchase of accessible houses or flats;
- The employment of a police inspector;
- The financing of the Equal Partners Foundation;
- Insurance Scheme by Lombard Bank;
- Accessibility at Calypso Hotel.

2. Special Identity Cards

2.1 KNPD continued to issue the special identity card to persons with disability with the aim of helping them have equal opportunities. The statistics relating to this service are shown in Table number 9.

2.2 Persons in possession of this card are entitled to a number of benefits, a list of which can be obtained from the offices of KNPD, from the booklet Benefits and Services for Persons with Disability (pages 35-36), or from KNPD's website.

Special Identity Card	Table number 9	
	2003	2004
New Applications	832	842
Accepted	823	834
Not Accepted	9	8
Renewed	505	608
Withdrawn	234	642
Total of persons with disability in possession of the special identity card	6603	6795

Chapter 5

Physical Access

1. Access for All

1.1 In 2004, KNPD continued working on the implementation of the principles of Access for All. Its work in this sector can be divided into three categories:

- a) The application of the Equal Opportunities Act (which is discussed in another section of this report);
- b) The vetting of applications for development on behalf of the Malta Environment and Planning Authority (MEPA);
- c) Consultancy and other activities.

1.2.1 This year, KNPD continued to vet applications for development made to **MEPA** for buildings open to the public and which are of major use. Table number 10 shows the statistics about this service:

Vetting Applications for Development	Table Number 10	
	2003	2004
Applications	486	436
Recommended subject to certain conditions	229 (47%)	208(48%)
Not recommended	196 (40%)	181(42%)
More information requested	25 (5%)	14(3%)
Pending	36 (7%)	33(8%)

1.2.2 KNPD notes that there was a decrease of about 10% in the number of vetted applications. This may be due to the fact that KNPD is vetting applications more than once less often. The level of the recommended applications remained the same as that of the previous year.

1.2.3 KNPD carries out inspections so that MEPA can issue the Clearance/Compliance Certificate for water and electricity to the applicants. KNPD's work in this sector is presented in Table number 11:

Vetting for the Clearance/Compliance Certificate	Table number 11	
	2003	2004
Applications	18	32
Recommended subject to certain conditions	11 (61%)	12 (38%)
Not recommended	5 (28%)	17 (53%)
Pending	2 (11%)	3 (9%)

1.2.4 Once again, KNPD deems the figures in Table 11 to be very preoccupying for two reasons:

- a) the number of buildings that were vetted for the Compliance Certificate (32) is low when compared to the number of new applications (436) that were vetted even though there was a slight improvement from the previous year.
- b) the number of applications that were not recommended (53%) is high, and has increased significantly from that of the previous year. This means that the developers and/or the architects are not following the KNPD guidelines that have been adopted by MEPA.

1.3 The Reasonable Accommodation Board made two important decisions regarding physical accessibility. These were:

a) Industrial Buildings

This development is regulated by an agreement reached between the Development Corporation (Malta Enterprise) and KNPD. The Board decided to improve this agreement by subdividing industrial development into three categories rather than two: the production section, the administrative, and the section open for the public.

As regards the production section, the board will enforce the following:

- a) the principal entrance and at least one toilet have to conform to the KNPD guidelines;
- b) if this part of the building consists of only two floors, there is no need of a lift or a shaft;
- c) if this part of the building consists of three floors, there has to be a shaft which permits the installation of a lift in accordance with KNPD guidelines and the lift must be installed as necessary;
- d) if this part of the building consists of more than three floors, there has to be a lift in accordance with KNPD guidelines.

As regards the administrative part, the board will enforce the following:

- a) the principal entrance and at least one toilet have to conform to the KNPD guidelines;
- b) if this part of the building consists of only two floors, there has to be a shaft which permits the installation of a lift in accordance with KNPD guidelines and the lift must be installed as necessary;
- b) if this part of the building consists of more than two floors, there has to be a lift in accordance with KNPD guidelines.

The part open to the public has to conform to the KNPD guidelines.

b) Small Enterprises

The Board notes that there were a number of small enterprises that requested to be exempted on the grounds of technical and financial problems, especially due to limitations of space. The Board deemed most of these requests to be reasonable and hence decided to divide these applications into three categories based on the total area of the building:

- a) If the total area does not exceed 75 square metres, the building has to have an accessible entrance in conformity with KNPD guidelines and can be exempted from having sanitary facilities and a lift accessible to everyone;

b) If the total area is between 76 and 150 square metres, the building has to have at least the main entrance and a toilet in conformity with KNPD guidelines and can be exempted from having a lift which is accessible to everyone;

c) If the total area exceeds 151 square metres, the building has to be completely accessible to everyone, that is, incorporating a lift, at least one toilet and a main entrance which are accessible to everyone.

1.4 KNPD's Guidelines

This year, KNPD started a consultation process aimed at reviewing the guidelines published in the booklet Access for All- Design Guidelines. After internal consultation, KNPD prepared a new draft version of these guidelines which was presented and discussed during the Persons with Disability Week. The seminar was presented in collaboration with the Building Industry Consultative Committee (BICC) and was introduced by Hon. George Pullicino, Minister for the Environment. Several entities, both from the persons with disability sector and from the industry sector, gave feedback about the draft. KNPD will pursue this consultation process till the end of February 2005 in view of the publication of the second edition of the Guidelines. (A copy of this draft can be obtained from KNPD's offices or from KNPD's website www.knpd.org).

KNPD was given funds to carry out this consultation exercise and to publish the booklet by the European Union's Community Action Programme to Combat Discrimination.

1.5 KNPD continued to work closely with the Malta Standards Authority to assure that the principle of Access for All is respected even by means of the standards set. For this reason, KNPD is represented on the board of this Authority.

2. The Blue Sticker Service

2. 1 KNPD also continued to make recommendations to the Commissioner of Police for persons with disability to receive the Blue Sticker service. This benefit primarily entitles persons with a mobility impairment to park in public parking places reserved for them.

2.2 During this period, KNPD worked in this sector as shown in Table number 12.

BLUE STICKER	Table number 12	
	2003	2004
New Applications	592	472
Recommended	573	461
Not Recommended	19	11
Number of persons who renewed the Blue Sticker	288	4165
Withdrawn	400	656

2. 3 This year, following an agreement made with the Commissioner of Police and the Transport Authority, KNPD started to change the Blue Sticker to make it similar to that of the European Union. In this way the new Maltese Blue Sticker can be used all over the European Union, while European Blue Stickers can be used in Malta. This year, KNPD issued 4000 new Blue Stickers. It is hoped that the renewal exercise will be completed towards the beginning of 2005.

3. Reserved Parking Areas

- 3.1 This service is being provided by the Malta Transport Authority but is still being funded by KNPD, as agreed by the parties.

- 3.2 In accordance with the same agreement, KNPD continued to administer the Review Panel for this service as recommended by the Ombudsman. This Review Panel is made up of a representative of the Local Councils Association as Chairman and representatives of KNPD, the Malta Transport Authority and the Health Division as members.

- 3.3 This year, the Review Panel functioned as shown in Table Number 13:

REVIEW PANEL OF RESERVED PARKING	Table Number 13	
	2003	2004
Applications examined	35	91
First decision confirmed	20 (57%)	36 (40%)
First decision changed	12 (34%)	55 (60%)
Pending	2 (6%)	0

4. Exemption from Registration Tax

- 4.1 KNPD continued to make recommendations to the Ministry of Finance to exempt persons with disability (and, in certain circumstances, their families) from the registration tax and/or customs duty on the cars they need. Table number 15 shows statistics about this service:

Exemption from Registration Tax	Table Number 14	
	2003	2004
New applications	156	130
Recommended by the OHU*	97 (62%)	94 (72%)
Not recommended by the OHU*	19 (12%)	16 (12%)
Still have not used the exemption	9 (6%)	6 (5%)
Dropped applications	14 (9%)	0
Pending applications	17 (11%)	14 (11%)
<i>*Occupational Health Unit of the Health Division</i>		

4.2 In 2004, KNPD continued with the procedure of referring the recommendation to the Ministry of Finance for its approval when the applicant produces evidence that he is going to buy a car. The number of applicants (6 applicants) who have not yet made use of this exemption is slightly lower than that of last year and therefore it appears that the system is working.

4.3 This year there was a decrease in the number of applications but this is mostly due to the fact that no applications were dropped by KNPD since it is informing its clients better about what is needed before they submit their application. The number of recommended applications is close to that of the previous year.

5. Exemption from Road Licence Payment

5.1 KNPD continued to make recommendations to the Ministry of Finance to exempt drivers with disability according to the Social Security (1987) Act or who have a modified vehicle because of their disability from paying the Road Licence. The statistics for the year 2004 can be seen in Table Number 15.

Exemption from Road Licence Payment		Table Number 15
	2003	2004
New applications	136	98
Recommended by OHU*	79 (58%)	62 (63%)
Not recommended by OHU*	26 (19%)	20 (21%)
Withdrawn Applications	14 (10%)	0
Pending	17 (13%)	16 (16%)
<i>*Occupational Health Unit of the Health Division</i>		

5.2 Here too there was a substantial decrease from the previous year in the number of applications mainly due to the fact that there were no withdrawn applications. Moreover, the percentage of recommended applications increased.

6. Accessible Transport

6. The Foundation for Transport for an Independent Living

6.1 At the end of 1994, KNPD and the Foundation of Homes for an Independent Living established the Transport for Independent Living Foundation with the aim of providing accessible transport to persons with disability. KNPD nominates three members for the board of directors of this Foundation.

6.2 In 2004, KNPD again gave a financial grant of Lm12,000 to this Foundation to enable it to exercise its function and also seconded a person to run it full-time. This financial help by KNPD was granted after a recommendation by the NGO Liaison Committee of the Ministry for Social Policy.

6.3 In 2004, this Foundation had serious financial problems especially because its van suffered extensive damage in the September 2003 floods. KNPD helped the Foundation by commissioning Deloitte to draw up a financial report on its financial condition and to propose ways of managing it in a more viable way. KNPD is working to help this Foundation carry on its duties in a sustainable way.

Chapter 6

Access to Information

1 Collaboration with the Foundation for IT Accessibility (FITA)

1.1 KNPD and MITTS joined in 1998 to establish the Foundation for Information Technology Accessibility. KNPD has continued to offer its full support to this Foundation by nominating two persons for the Foundation's administrative board.

1.2 KNPD also collaborated with FITA by:

- a) developing a section of journals, books and CDs in the Resource Centre on this subject which can be used by everyone;
- b) implementing the agreement with the Community Chest Fund that assists financially persons with disability when buying a computer;
- c) organising, together with MCAST, computer courses for persons with intellectual disability or hearing impairment.

2. Relay Service for Textelephone

KNPD continued to provide the relay service for deaf persons who have a Textelephone so that they can have access to the whole telephony system. This service is provided by the company Dial-It 24 hours a day. Since it was found that the service was being used by a very limited number of people, the agreement between KNPD and the company was renegotiated and the service now costs KNPD much less.

3. Websave Service and SMS/Voicemail

KNPD used to make recommendations to Maltacom and GoMobile to provide financial assistance to people wanting to use the Websave service and SMS/Voicemail. KNPD reached an agreement with FITA to the effect that as from the beginning of 2004, these recommendations will be made by FITA.

Chapter 7

Education

1. The Ministerial Committee for Inclusive Education

At the end of 2003, the Ministry of Education announced that it was going to review special and inclusive education in Malta. KNPD was in favour of this exercise. During the Persons with Disability week, the Minister for Education announced the establishment of a Review Board that will carry out this exercise. This Board consist of Mr. Lino Spiteri (Chairman), Mr. George Borg, Ms. Anne Marie Callus, Mr. Joseph Cauchi and Ms. Micheline Sciberras.

This Review Board has already began to function and is fully supported by KNPD.

2 The Statementing Moderating Panel and the Appeals Board

The Ministry of Education has selected again the Statementing Moderating Panel and the Appeals Board as indicated by the policy document “Inclusive Education – Support to Students with Disability”. KNPD is contributing to this exercise through its representative in the Appeals Board, the Chairman of KNPD. The main aim of this policy and of these entities is that every student with disability has an individual educational programme according to his individual needs.

3 The Administration of Medicine in Regular Schools

One of the major problems faced by a number of parents of students with disability attending regular schools is the administration of medicine. Very often, parents have to go to school everyday to give the medicine to their children. KNPD understands that this is a complex issue and for this reason it has established a working group to make recommendations to the Ministry. This group is made up of Mr. Joe Camilleri (KNPD), Ms. Micheline Sciberras (Ministry of Education), and Dr. Simon Attard Montaldo (Ministry of Health). This group met several times during the year and it is hoped that they will submit a report to the Ministry of Education in the year 2005.

4. The University

4.1 KNPD continued to keep very close contact with the University Authorities to ensure that the Authorities and the University students are conscious of issues related to persons with disability. This contact can function on a more direct level because Mr Joe Camilleri, Chairman of KNPD, is also a member of the University Senate.

4.2 KNPD also gave its contribution through its Chairman in the committee which examines requests by students with disability who ask for different measures during examinations so as to have equal opportunities.

4.3 After consultation between KNPD, the Faculty of Education and the Linguistics Institute, a new optional course about the education of deaf students is being offered to B.Educ second year students. KNPD fully supports this course.

5. A Pilot Study at Maria Assumpta Secondary School

KNPD is working closely with Maria Assumpta Secondary School on beginning a pilot study which gives students with disability at this school an individual educational programme and gives their facilitators the necessary support to implement these programmes. This programme will last three years and began in October 2004. The school has also managed to obtain funds for the programme from the HSBC Care for Children Fund.

Chapter 8

Employment

1. The Employment and Training Corporation

1.1 KNPD kept continuous contacts with the Employment and Training Corporation for this to provide specialised services to persons with disability in both vocational training and employment. These contacts could be more direct because Mr Alfred Bezzina, the Executive Director of KNPD, is also a director of this Corporation.

1.2 The Employment and Training Corporation implemented recommendations made by KNPD a number of years ago to have a Permanent Support Scheme for Workers with Disability. This scheme has now been established and has started to function thanks to financial support from the Structural Funds of the European Union.

2. During the Persons with Disability Week KNPD organised the National Conference about the European Union Directive for Equality at Work. This conference was organised precisely on the International Human Rights Day. The main speaker in this conference was Ms. Elizabeth Straw from the EU Directorate for employment and Social Affairs. This Directive does not only concern persons with disability but also other minorities including age, sexual orientation, race and beliefs. During this conference several speakers shared their experiences: Ms Marianne Debono (disability), Carol Gatt (beliefs), Tesfamichael Beraki Mekonen (race) and Doria Grixt (sexual orientation). This directive was also discussed during this conference by a panel representing the Government: Mr Felix Borg from ETC and Dr Reno Vella from the Department of Industrial relations; the Unions: Mr Tony Zarb from GWU and Mr Jesmond Bonello from UHM; and by Employers: Dr. Paul Debattista from FOI and Mr Edwin Calleja from MEA. The conference was also addressed by Hon. Marie Louise Coleiro, the Opposition's speaker for this sector, and by Mr Charles Mizzi, Permanent Secretary at the Ministry of Education and employment on behalf of the Minister Louis Galea. Due to Parliamentary commitments, Hon. Dr Tonio Borg, Vice Prime Minister, could not attend this conference. This conference was organised in collaboration with the Jesuit Refugee Service and was financed by the European Union's Community Action Programme to Combat Discrimination.

3. Activity with the General Workers Union

KNPD collaborated in various activities organised by the General Workers Union for its activists with the aim of giving the necessary importance to issues of persons with disability at work, including those related to trade unions. KNPD also collaborated with the GWU in a business breakfast organised by the GWU for this aim.

Chapter 9

Day Services

1. Task Force

KNPD continued to work for an improvement in the Day Service for adults with disability, mainly through the task force led by the Permanent Secretary in the Ministry for the Family and Social Solidarity, whose aim is to prepare a plan for the development of these services. Through its Executive Director, KNPD is giving its contribution both in this task force as well as in the preparation of this plan. Two points that were discussed in depth during the meetings of this task force were:

- a) the financing of these services;
- b) their administrative responsibility since May 2003, when their department (the Department for the Elderly and Community Services) passed from the Ministry of Social Policy to the Ministry of Health and Community Services.

2 Service for New Clients

KNPD received a number of complaints that some persons with disability, especially those who were to leave the special schools, were not to be given the day service they need because of a lack of resources. KNPD brought up the issue in a number of ways:

- a) Task Force meetings about this Service;
- b) Public statements about the Government's budget;
- c) Meetings with the Prime Minister, the Minister for Education and the Minister for the Family and Social Solidarity.

After several discussions, this problem was solved for the year 2005 as the Minister for Education accepted a request for these students to remain for an extra year at these special schools.

KNPD has already voiced its concerns that in the Government Budget for the year 2005 there are not the necessary funds to solve the problem. KNPD will keep on working to make sure that in September these students receive the services they need and possibly for the problem to be solved once and for all.

Chapter 10

Residential Services

1. SAPPORT Agency

KNPD continued to give its full backing to the SAPPORT Agency within the Social Services Foundation. This Agency has the responsibility to develop community services to help persons with disability live in the community and, when this is no longer possible, to provide them with homes in the community with the necessary support. KNPD gave its full support to the Agency by:

- a) working to ensure that it is given the funds it needs;
- b) being represented on the Consultative Board of the Agency;
- c) being represented in the Committee for the Allocation of Services that examines requests for services from this Agency.

2. Legal Framework

KNPD continued discussing with representatives of the Ministry for the Family and Social Solidarity about the Bill regarding guardianship. Its aim is to improve in a substantial way the procedures used to ensure that persons who cannot administer their wealth and who cannot completely look after themselves will have legal protection about whoever provides them with the support they need. The drafting of this law is ready and the work will continue for it to be processed in Parliament as soon as possible.

3. Personal Assistance Scheme

A small number of persons with disability are hiring personal assistance services from people abroad. For this purpose these assistants need a work permit from the Citizenship Department. After an agreement reached between KNPD and this Department, the latter accepted to consider favourably applications of this type once they are recommended by KNPD. Consequently, KNPD now makes these recommendations after its professional people visit the applicants in their home. KNPD's work in this sector is illustrated in Table number 16.

Personal Assistance Scheme	Table number 16	
	2003	2004
New Applications	10	20
Recommended	10	17 (85%)
Not eligible	0	2 (10%)
Pending	0	1 (5%)

4. Wens Foundation and Respite Care Services Foundation

KNPD joined forces with the Association of Youths with Disability and with the National Society of Parents of Persons with Disability in order to establish the Wens Foundation and the Respite Care Services Foundation respectively. The former provides residential services in the community to a small number of persons with disability while the latter provides temporary residential services to persons with disability as to give some relief to the families taking care of them. KNPD has been giving its support to these initiatives by nominating a number of members to be part of the managing boards of these Foundations, specifically, two for the Wens Foundation and three for the Respite Care Services Foundation.

5. Improvements in Homes of Persons with Disability

The Housing Authority has a scheme by which it provides financial assistance to persons with disability with the aim of helping them modify their homes in accordance with their specific needs. The manager who directs the Assistive Apparatus Fund represents KNPD in the committee which examines these requests.

Chapter 11

Action in the Community

1. Social Work with Persons with Disability

KNPD continued to work with the Unit of SAPPOR Agency which provides social work services to persons with disability and their families. KNPD provided premises at the Centru Hidma Socjali in Santa Venera for the operation of this Unit, and also offered administrative assistance.

2. Subsidy on Postage to Voluntary Organisations

KNPD again allocated a sum of money from its funds to subsidise the postage used by voluntary organisations which work in the field of persons with disability. This subsidy amounts to 50% of the total expense. During this period, the organisations which benefited from this service were:

- Down Syndrome Association
- Physically Handicapped Rehabilitation Fund
- Equal Partners Foundation;
- Respite Care Services Foundation;
- Society for the Visually Impaired;
- The National Association of Parents of Persons with Disability;
- National Deaf People Association;
- The Multiple Sclerosis Association;
- The Commission for the Sick and Persons with Disability of the Catholic Action Movement;
- The Muscular Dystrophy Group;
- Caritas Group Persons with Epilepsy.

3. Work with Other Organisations

This year, KNPD worked closely with a number of other organisations in order to reach its aims. Among these one can find:

- ADHD Group
- Local Councils Association
- Housing Authority
- Broadcasting Authority
- British Council
- Building Industry Consultative Committee
- Dar Nazareth
- The Federation of Industries
- Dar tal-Providenza
- Federation of Organisations for Persons with Disability
- Foundation for the Development of the Maltese Sign Language
- Eden Foundation
- Equal Partners Foundation

- The Independent Living Foundation
- Development of Maltese Sign Language Foundation
- National Association of Parents of Persons with Disability
- Deaf People's Association
- The Spina Bifida Association
- General Workers Union
- Gozo Association for the Deaf
- Gozo Association for the Visually Impaired (GAVI)
- Caritas Group Persons with Epilepsy
- Heritage Malta
- Newspapers
- Chamber of Architects
- Maltese Islamic Society
- Commissioner for Children
- Commission of the Family
- Maltese Council of Persons with Disability
- Maltese Women Council
- Radio Stations
- Television Stations
- The Order of St. John (Blood Bank)
- Malta Employers' Association
- Malta Gay Rights Movement
- Malta Labour Party
- Malta Lifts Association
- Malta Standard Authority
- Malta Union of Teachers
- Nationalist Party
- Park of Friendship
- Union Haddiema Maghqudin

3.2 KNPD collaborated in two important activities:

- The Conference about Cultural Heritage and Persons with Disability organised by Heritage Malta;
- The Conference by the Pastoral Commission of Persons with Disability of the Maltese Church about its formulation of a policy for this sector.

Chapter 12

Research and Training

1. The Disability Issues Programme

KNPD continued to give a series of lectures on issues related to disability to various students and employees in order to broaden their knowledge about this field, especially from the social aspect. Table number 17 shows the work of KNPD in this respect:

Lectures on Disability Issues		Table number 17	
Client	Course	Number of Participants	
University of Malta Faculty of Education	Primary	80	
	Secondary	70	
	Faculty of Medicine	50	
	FEMA	Social Work	45
	Workers Participation Centre		40
	B Psych		60
Institute of Health Care		240	
Education Division	Institute of Tourism Studies	50	
Housing Authority		18	
Employment and Training Corporation	Careworkers	154	
Malta Transport Authority	Drivers	80	
Mtarfa Resource Centre		30	
HSBC	Customer Care	45	
Dar Nazareth		5	
Total		977	

1.2 The number of participants in these lectures decreased substantially mainly because they were not offered to students of early education and the number of students in the Faculty of Education also decreased.

1.3 KNPD has been trying, with little success, to introduce this course in other faculties, especially those of Medicine, Architecture and Theology. Some lectures in other units began to be given in the faculty of Medicine while in the Faculty of Architecture there was a proposal for an optional unit. However, there were no developments in the Faculty of Theology.

2. KNPD's website

KNPD has continued to work on its website, in order for it to be constantly updated with respect to KNPD's work and also to make it accessible to everyone.

3. PEKTUR (Continuous Education, Training and Research Programme)

- 3.1 This programme was established in 1998 with the aim of offering financial support in continuous education, training and research in the field of disability. This year, PEKTUR once again issued a call for application for training and research in the field of persons with disability. The programme received six applications and offered financial assistance to four applicants:
- A person with disability going for a work experience abroad;
 - A person with disability going abroad on a study visit;
 - The ADHD Support Group's publication of an information booklet for teachers;
 - The Malta Caritas Epilepsy Association's publication of a poster for an international conference held in Malta.

The programme received requests for persons to attend conferences related to disability issues in Malta and abroad. This programme does not accept such requests unless the request is for the reimbursement of extra expenses that a person with disability has in attending these conferences.

4. The Speak Out! Programme

- 4.1 PEKTUR organised another SPEAK OUT! course for fifteen activists with intellectual disability. The aim of this course is to provide the participants with the necessary training to be leaders in this sector. This was the first time that such a course was organised for this sector of the population. The persons who attended this course were given a certificate in an activity organised by the participants themselves. The activity was presided by His Excellency Dr. E Fenech Adami, President of Malta, who, apart from presenting a certificate of attendance to the participants of the course, also answered questions made by the group.
- 4.2 The course was so successful that the participants decided to keep meeting on a regular basis.

5. The Research, 'The Major Concerns of Persons with Disability and their Families'

- 5.1 KNPD and the National Statistics Office carried out a survey aimed at unveiling the major concerns of persons with disability and their families. One thousand persons with disability were chosen from KNPD's Register of Persons with Disability. All disabilities, regions of Malta and ages were represented by the chosen persons. 700 out of the 1000 chosen persons agreed to participate in the survey. There was an attempt to, as much as possible, enable the persons with disability answer the questionnaire themselves. For this reason, some of the interviewers were Maltese Sign Language Interpreters or people who work with persons with intellectual disability.
- 5.2 The results of this survey were presented in a public forum during the Persons with Disability Week. The seminar was inaugurated by Hon. Dolores Cristina, Minister of the Family and Social Solidarity. A short version of the report was presented by Ms. Anne Marie Callus and Mr. Andrew Briffa and was followed by

reactions from a panel consisting of Mr. Charles Borg, Ms. Rita Borg, Ms. Marcel Pisani, Mr. Frans Ripard and Ms. Micheline Sciberras. Mr. Fred Bezzina presented this report in various formats: the full report printed in Maltese, in English and in a large font; a full audio version of the report; a short version of the report in Maltese and in English; an easy-to-read version and a video version in Maltese Sign Language. The seminar was closed by Mr. Joe Camilleri, Chairman of KNPD, and Mr. Alfred Camilleri, Director of NSO. These publications can be obtained from the offices of KNPD or from KNPD's website, www.knpd.org.

5.3 This research, seminar and various other publications were possible thanks to funding obtained from the European Union Community Action Programme to Combat Discrimination.

6. Research on Access to Sports for Persons with Disability

KNPD began a research programme with three other countries about "Designing Inclusive Sports Activities and Facilities". Apart from research, the programme also involves the exchange of persons with disability between these countries. The first exchange involved five employees of KNPD together with a personal assistant participating in a meeting in Bucharest, Romania. The Maltese delegation was made up of Ms. Rosanne Fenech, Mr. Clayton Vella, Mr. Kevin Attard, Ms. Helen Attard, Mr. Eugenio Calleja and Ms. Angela Agius. They attended a meeting as part of a project. KNPD was granted funds for this project by the European Union Programme, Grundtvig.

Chapter 13

Information and Public Education

1. Resource Centre

- 1.1 During the year 2004, KNPD continued to work on its Resource Centre which is to be found in its offices at the Centru Hidma Soċjali, Santa Venera. Everyone can make use of it during office hours, including Saturday morning.
- 1.2 Table number 18 illustrates the resources of this Centre and the work done in 2004:

Resource Centre		Table Number 18	
	Borrowed	New	Total
Books	1384	207	3737
Periodicals	83	0	29*
Videos	67	6	431
Audio Cassettes	17	8	96
Educational Aids	218	0	218
CDs	11	19	69
Persons who used the Centre in 2004			484
Persons registered with the Centre			1097
<i>*KNPD is in possession of various editions of 29 different periodicals</i>			

- 1.3 There was a very encouraging increase of 73% in the number of persons (with disability, students, professionals, etc.) using the Centre.

2. New Publications by KNPD

During this year KNPD published the following:

- An English version of **Services and Benefits to Persons with Disability** – a detailed collection of information about benefits and services offered in Malta to persons with disability;
- A report on the Research, **‘The Major Concerns of Persons with Disability and their Families’**.
- **Equal Opportunities Act – the Fourth Year**: a booklet about KNPD’s work about main cases brought before it because of discrimination against persons with disability in the fourth year since this Act came into effect;
- KNPD’s **Annual Report** for the year 2003;
- A video of the play **Lajf** produced by the Drama Unit of the Education Division.

- 2.1 All these publications (with the exception of the video) can be obtained from the Secretariat of KNPD;
- a) in Maltese or in English in normal font;
 - b) in Maltese or in English in large font;

- c) in audio format in Maltese;
- d) in Braille.

Moreover, these publications are also found on KNPDP's website, www.knpd.org.

3. Indaqs

During the year 2004, KNPDP continued to publish its newsletter "Indaqs" every six months, in May and November 2004. This publication is distributed to all persons with disability who are registered with KNPDP and to all those involved in this sector. The newsletter can also be obtained in English, in audio format, in large font or from KNPDP's website.

4. Persons with Disability Week

- 4.1 Every year KNPDP organises the Persons with Disability Week which coincides with the International Day on the 3rd of December. The main aim of this Week is to raise public awareness about persons with disability and their families.
- 4.2 This year the Week was organised between Friday 3rd and Saturday 11th December with the theme **Diversity Strengthens**.
- 4.3 Some of the activities organised during this Week were funded by the European Union Community Action Programme to Combat Discrimination.
- 4.4 The main activities organised by KNPDP during this week were:
 - **Press Conference** to inaugurate this Week. The programme of activities was presented and explained during this conference.
 - A Seminar in which the research "**The Major Concerns of Persons with Disability and their Family**" was presented. (See section about this research).
 - The above research was presented to **persons with intellectual disability** during a meeting held for them at the NSO offices. Mr Joe Camilleri, chairman of KNPDP, and Mr Reno Camilleri, NSO chairman, spoke in this activity.
 - A **Ministerial Statement** by Hon. Dolores Cristina and Mr Omar Jelassi, a person with disability, was broadcast on TVM on the International Day of Persons with Disability.
 - **Two Statements** issued by KNPDP about this theme. One of these was distributed to all the media and addressed to the general public while another was distributed among all the schools and addressed to all the children.
 - Consultative Conference about the draft, "**Access for All-Design Guidelines**" (see Physical Access Section).
 - A meeting about "**European Union Programmes and Persons with Disability**", in which various Maltese officials in charge of programmes like Youth, Leonardo, Socrates and Euroguidance gave more information to persons with disability. Moreover, Mr Keith

Callus, Mr Genio Calleja, and Ms Debbie Schembri, persons with disability, shared their experience in these programmes with the audience.

- **Official Visit by the Prime Minister** Hon. Dr Lawrence Gonzi at the offices of KNPDP during which the letter of appointment was presented to the members of KNPDP. Six persons with disability or their parents shared their experiences with the Prime Minister and those present. These were Ms Sarah Cassar, Ms Ann Marie Galea Naudi, Mr Steve Mulvany, Ms Mariella Schembri, Mr Leon Sciberras, Mr Ivo Tabone Vassallo. At the end of the visit, the Prime Minister was presented with a mouth painting by the Gozitan artist Frans Camilleri.
- National Conference about the **European Union Directive for Equality in Employment** (see Employment Section).
- **Human Rights Walk** from Freedom Square to The Palace in Valletta. After some speeches by different minorities, a Declaration in favour of Human Rights was presented to the Prime Minister Hon. Dr Lawrence Gonzi. The speeches were given by Sina Bugeja (gender), Joe Camilleri (disability), Gabriella Calleja (sexual orientation), Sonia Camilleri (children), Carol Gatt (beliefs) and Tesfamichael Beraki Mekonen (race). This was preceded by a talent show.
- **Blood Donation** by persons with disability and their friends at KNPDP's offices. This activity was held in collaboration with the Order of the Knights' Blood Bank.
- **Thanksgiving** reception that KNPDP organised to show its appreciation for work done in this sector.
- A short **Video Clip** and poster with the Week's theme. The poster was distributed around Malta and Gozo and the video clip was broadcast for free by all television stations during this week.

5. Diversity Strengthens Campaign

5.1 KNPDP, together with the Jesuit Refugee Service, applied for funds from the European Union to organise a campaign against discrimination. KNPDP was given 100,000 Euro to organise a campaign with the theme Diversity Strengthens.

5.2 This campaign was launched during a press conference addressed by the Hon. Dolores Cristina, Minister for the Family and Social Solidarity, Hon. Marie Louise Coleiro, Opposition spokesperson about Solidarity, Mr Joe Camilleri, chairman of KNPDP, and Father Pierre Grech Margeurat, director of the Jesuit Refugee Service.

5.3 This campaign includes a number of activities spanning over a year. Some of these will be held in conjunction with the Jesuit Refugee Service and some will be held separately. These activities have already been organised in these two months:

- National Conference about the EU Directive about Equality in Employment;
- Human Rights Walk;
- Publication of a poster and leaflet about the campaign;
- Four billboards with the theme Diversity Strengthens.

Chapter 14

International Activities

1. High Level Group on Disability

The European Union Commission has a High Level Group on Disability. As a rule, this Group meets three times a year in Brussels. Now that Malta is a member of the European Union, it has been invited to participate in this Group. The Ministry of the Family and Social Solidarity asked KNPD to represent Malta in this Group. Mr Fred Bezzina, Director of KNPD, began to attend the Group's meetings. Since May 2003, this Group met twice and discussed various issues related to persons with disability, especially the programmes from which this sector can benefit directly or indirectly. This Group also discusses several measures to be implemented by the European Union Commission in order to ensure that these affect persons with disability and their families positively.

2. European Disability Forum

KNPD is an observer member of the European Disability Forum (EDF) which is a principal organisation within the European Union within this sector. This organisation keeps KNPD informed about what is happening in Europe in this sector. This year, high officials of KNPD held discussions with the President, Yannis Vardakastanis, the retiring Director, Stefan Trommel, and the new EDF Director, Carlotta Besozzi when they visited Malta in September. A major issue discussed in these meetings was the manner in which their collaboration at a European level could be improved.

3. United Nations Convention

3.1 Discussions are being held at an international level with the aim of leading the United Nations to draft a convention on the civil rights of persons with disability. These meetings are being held both at an international level in New York and at a European level in Brussels and other European cities. In 2003, two meetings were held in New York, two in Brussels and one in The Hague, Holland. Mr Joe Camilleri and Mr Fred Bezzina represented Malta in the second meeting in New York, Ms Anne Marie Callus represented Malta in Brussels and Mr Camilleri attended The Hague meeting. Due to financial limitations and the common voice of the EU in this matter, it was decided that KNPD would only attend meetings in Europe.

3.2 KNPD considers the debates about this international convention about persons with disability to be extremely important and believes that persons with disability should be informed of the developments and also given the opportunity to express their views. For this reason, KNPD held a public meeting in order to supply relevant information and to facilitate a discussion about the matter. This meeting was held in July 2004 and was attended by a significant number of people. The meeting was introduced by Hon. Dolores Cristina, Minister of the Family and Social Solidarity.

The members present at this meeting emphasised that this Convention should give importance to the following:

- a) the education of children with disability;
- b) parents and families of persons with disability;
- c) the right to life of persons with disability even prior to their birth;
- d) the need to recognise Sign Language of deaf persons;
- e) the need to give importance to the double discrimination to which women with disability are victims;
- f) the need to monitor this Convention effectively also with the full participation of persons with disability and their families.

KNPD took note of these comments and will keep them in mind during the participation of its officials in meetings about the drafting of this important convention.

4 Community Action Programme to Combat against Discrimination

This year, KNPD made two applications for the European Union Community Action Programme to Combat against Discrimination. These were accepted. These were:

- Awareness-raising campaigns. The application was made in conjunction with the Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS) for which KNPD was awarded 100,000 Euro. This year long campaign with the theme “Diversity Strengthens” will include activities organised together or separately by KNPD and JRS;
- Self Advocacies seminars for persons with intellectual disability;
- Persons with Disability Parliament

The following activities are being funded by this campaign and organised by KNPD:

- An art competition for schools;
- A course for teachers about an Inclusive society;
- National Disability Information Days for which KNPD was awarded 40,000 Euro. KNPD had to organise two information days. The first day was held during the Persons with Disability Week 2004 and the second one will be held in the beginning of 2005.

5. European Parliament Elections

On the occasion of the elections for the European Parliament held in May 2004, KNPD sent a letter to all Maltese candidates and Heads of Political Parties which participated in this election. In this letter, KNPD asked them to work in favour of persons with disability and also sent them the European Disability Forum Manifesto for these elections together with details from different European Parliament Groups regarding persons with disability.

6. European Conferences

KNPD receives several invitations, mostly related to the European Union, to participate in seminars, conferences and other activities abroad. KNPD decides

whether to participate in these activities or not depending on its financial resources and the importance of these meetings. KNPD believes that, together with persons with disability, their families and their organisations, it should remain up to date with what is happening in this sector both in Malta and abroad. During this year, KNPD accepted the following invitations:

- Malta accepted the invitation of the Italian Minister of Foreign Affairs to attend a seminar in Rome about Technical Cooperation and Persons with Disability Sector. Mr Joe Camilleri, chairman, and Mr Fred Bezzina, Executive Director, attended this seminar. Although this is a sector in which Malta can hardly contribute, KNPD explored ways of helping especially through human resources.
- An intercultural seminar for youths with disability with the theme, “Direct Involvement of Youths with Less Opportunities”. Lara Buttigieg and Ramona Cassar, two persons with disability, and Rita Calleja, personal assistant, represented Malta in this seminar in Calabria, Italy. The participants shared their experiences and discussed ways of developing their cooperation.
- Mr. Joseph Stafrace, a person with disability, and Mr. Ronald Caruana attended a seminar for youths with disability with the theme “Planning Diversity”. This seminar was held in Izola, Slovenia, and it gave the opportunity to the participants to get to know more about the European Union Programme ‘Youth’ and to discuss how youths with disability can benefit more from such projects.
- KNPD’s Executive Director, Mr. Fred Bezzina, went on a study visit to the Disability Rights Commission (DRC) in the United Kingdom. This was part of the project “The Rights of Disabled Persons: Campaigning for Equality”, which was funded by the EU programme, Leonardo. Mr. Bezzina visited this Commission’s offices in London and Manchester. DRC is the United Kingdom Equivalent of the National Commission Persons with Disability. This visit also included meetings with the DRC Chairperson, Mr. Bert Massie, and with Rod Rodd, office manager of DRC’s London branch.
- The Presidency of the European Union for the second six months of 2004, the Netherlands, organised a conference with the theme, “International Forum on Disability Management”. Malta was represented by Ms. Rosanne Fenech, an official within KNPD’s secretariat, and Tessa Anastasi, a parent of a person with disability and an activist of the Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder Group.
- A representative of KNPD attended a European Conference organised on the occasion of the International Day of Persons with Disability between the 2nd and the 3rd of December. This Conference is organised every year in the European Parliament in Brussels. This year’s theme was “The Creation of Employment Opportunities for persons with Disability”. KNPD nominated Ms Vicky Sciberras, a professional with disability within the secretariat of KNPD, to attend this conference together with her personal assistant.

7. Support to Other Entities

KNPD has given its support to entities working in this sector and also to individuals with disability to benefit from European Union programmes. This year the secretariat of KNPD assisted:

- (a) Ms. Debbie Schembri, a person with disability, supported by her personal assistant, Ms. Larissa Schembri, to work for four weeks in Swansea, Wales. This was made possible by funds from the European Union Programme, Leonardo. Ms. Schembri carried out clerical work at Shaw Trust, a non-governmental organisation specialising in services for persons with disability.
- (b) Five workers of the SAPPOR Agency to go on a study visit to the *Foereningen Salta Byu* in Stockholm, Sweden, as part of the project “Day and Residential Services for Disabled People”, organised by the EU programme, Leonardo.
- (c) The Employment and Training Corporation (ETC) in sending Ms Jennifer Debono, an official of the Corporation, to a seminar about Employment and the Quota System organised by the European Disability Forum in Athens, Greece. The ETC applies the quota law (Employment – Persons with Disability – Act).

8. VSA Arts Festival and Educational Conference

Mr. Joe Camilleri, Chairman of KNPD, was invited by the VSA Arts of America to attend the International Arts Festival and Educational Conference that is organised in Washington, US. This invitation was made through Ms. Marie Therese Lowell from the Washington-based Maltese Embassy for the United States. Mr Camilleri attended this conference together with Mr Fred Bezzina who, also gave the necessary support to Mr. Camilleri.

The arts festival gave the opportunity to persons with and without disability to exhibit their artistic talents, which turned out to be of a very high level. The educational conference, that was held simultaneously with the festival, focused on how art can be integrated in the educational curriculum of students with disability in order to contribute to their full development and on how art can be an effective means for inclusion both at and away from school.

This participation was made possible by the support of VSA Arts, Alitalia, HSBC (Malta), the Malta Community Chest Fund, GoMobile and the Maltese Embassy in Washington and the Maltese Council for Persons with Disability. The support provided by these entities also helped Mr. Camilleri and Mr. Bezzina to participate the Committee meetings of the United Nations that are discussing the Convention on Persons with Disability. A session of these meetings was held exactly before this festival at the United Nations’ Headquarters in New York.