
Unawareness of equality laws widespread

- **53 % of potential discrimination and harassment victims do not know their rights**

Valletta, 3rd August 2009 - According to a recent Eurobarometer Survey, 53 % of respondents say they do not know their rights should they be a victim of discrimination or harassment. To ensure that rights are protected, the European Commission has detailed anti discrimination laws and a European network of National Equality Bodies to help those seeking advice has been set up. Moreover, in order to promote the benefits of a diverse society and to fight discrimination the European Commission is currently running the awareness raising campaign “For Diversity. Against Discrimination”.

Eurobarometer Survey - Key Facts

According to a recent Eurobarometer Survey, discrimination based on ethnic origin (62%) is considered to be the most widespread form of discrimination in the European Union, followed by discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation (51%) and disability (45%). The survey also states that Europeans are highly comfortable with the idea of having a member of most minority groups as a neighbour. However, a quarter of Europeans would be uncomfortable with a Roma neighbour, compared to just 6 % stating the same for a neighbour from a different ethnic origin than theirs. Furthermore, 15 % of respondents claim they were discriminated against in the 12 month period before the survey and 29 % say they witnessed discrimination happening to someone else over the same period. Interestingly, discrimination overall tends to be seen as being on the decline, although not at a dramatic rate.

National Equality Bodies

In order to ensure that EU law in this area is implemented correctly and effectively, **Equality Bodies** have been established across the Member States of the European Union to promote equality and to combat discrimination in the areas covered by the EU Equal Treatment Directives. They provide a number of services including providing independent assistance to victims of discrimination, conducting independent surveys on discrimination and publishing independent reports and making recommendations.

The "For Diversity. Against Discrimination" campaign

Launched by the European Commission's Directorate General for Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities in 2003, the "For Diversity. Against Discrimination." information campaign informs people in Europe of their rights and responsibilities under EU legislation.

The campaign is organised in all 27 EU Member States to raise awareness of discrimination and the legislation which exists to combat it as well as to highlight the benefits of diversity within the workplace and to society at large. It sets out to combat any discrimination based on a person's racial or ethnic origin in all areas of life and any discrimination in the workplace based on age, disability, sexual orientation, religion or belief.

To adequately implement the campaign at national level, **National Working Groups** have been set up which bring together discrimination experts from different sectors and organisations in all 27 EU Member States. By bringing together representatives from NGOs, business organisations, employer and employee associations, trade unions, and national ministries, the campaign is benefiting from the expertise of a wide range of people working across the EU.

For further information, visit: www.stop-discrimination.info

The National Equality Body for [country] is: National Commission for the Promotion of Equality (NCPE)
<http://www.equality.gov.mt>

The current Members of the National Working Group in Malta are:

National Commission for the Promotion of Equality – www.equality.gov.mt

National Commission Persons with Disability – www.knpd.org

Malta Council of Commerce and Enterprise - www.maltachamber.org.mt

Malta Employers Association – www.maltaemployers.com

Union Haddiema Maghqudin – www.uhm.org.mt

Malta Gay Rights Movement – www.maltagayrights.org

Jesuit Faith and Justice Centre – www.jesuit.org.mt/justice

National Youth Council – www.knz.org.mt

National Association of Pensioners

The Friends of the Adult Training Centre

Jesuit Refugee Centre – www.jrsmalta.org

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Since 2003 the Directorate General for Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities of the European Commission is running a pan-European information campaign on combating discrimination on the grounds of ethnic origin, religion or belief, age, disability and sexual orientation. The campaign "For Diversity. Against Discrimination." is designed to inform people about their rights under EU anti-discrimination legislation, to promote the positive benefits of diversity in the workplace as well as to indicate contact organisations to victims of discrimination. So that the campaign is effective throughout all 27 EU Member States, it is coordinated through a unique structure of National Working Groups (NWG) which brings together discrimination experts from different sectors and organisations coming mainly from NGOs, trade unions, equality bodies and governmental bodies. Many of the activities carried out under the campaign are organised nationally and locally in each EU Member State with support from a European level. They comprise, amongst others, partnerships with national events, media relations, production and distribution of campaign material in 23 languages, the organisation of a Journalist Award and a website: www.stop-discrimination.info

The NWG members for Malta are:

National Commission for the Promotion of Equality – www.equality.gov.mt

National Commission Persons with Disability – www.knpd.org

Malta Council of Commerce and Enterprise - www.maltachamber.org.mt

Malta Employers Association – www.maltaemployers.com

Union Haddiema Maghqudin – www.uhm.org.mt

Malta Gay Rights Movement – www.maltagayrights.org

Jesuit Faith and Justice Centre – www.jesuit.org.mt/justice

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National Association of Pensioners

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Learn more about the campaign in Malta at the following event:

Exhibition for Cartoons on the theme "For Diversity Against Discrimination" (FDAD) which will be held from 1st to 11th October 2009