



# Putting Human Rights on the Agenda

***National Election – June 2017***

*An election has been called for June 3rd 2017. Elections are a time to set a political agenda, as well as to express opinions, critiques and promises about what the past, present and future look like. In this process, we must make sure that a range of voices are heard and respected, and that the debate and proposed outcomes are consistent with the creation of a cohesive society.*

**During this electoral campaign, we urge all political parties, entities and commentators to:**

- 1.** Avoid populist and divisive discourse and address responsibly and fairly sensitive topics relating to migration, migrant groups and ethnic minorities, including asylum seekers and refugees, to safeguard their dignity and avoid stigmatization.
- 2.** Condemn, and wherever possible stop, any materials and statements that intentionally or indirectly incite hatred or express prejudice on the grounds of race, colour, nationality or national origin, ethnic background, migrant and legal status or religious belief.
- 3.** Refrain from political alliance or association with any political party, organization or individual candidates that incite ethnic prejudice and racial hatred and to ensure that all candidates contesting on the party's ticket refrain from such rhetoric. Candidates who engage with such rhetoric should be reprimanded and removed from the party's ticket.

## **We urge political parties, in their manifestos and policies to ensure:**

1. A strong commitment to upholding human rights principles and practice when it comes to policies relating to minorities and particularly migration policies and practice including access to protection, reception conditions, status and protection, residence rights and access to citizenship.

2. A direct effort to strengthen the country's legislative and institutional frameworks on issues of human rights and equality, ensuring accountability for human rights violations and access to justice for those experiencing violations to their rights.

3. The setting up of a truly independent and strong equality body or human rights commission, in adherence with the Paris principles and other best practice models. Such a body needs to be adequately resourced in terms of human and financial resources and empowered to take meaningful action in addressing cases of discrimination including structural discrimination.

4. A commitment to adopt and implement without delay an integration strategy for Malta, based on the notion of integration as a process of mutual understanding, and enacted through an open process of consultation and participation with multiple stakeholders.

5. The development of structures and systems for the collection of diversity data in Malta which will be collected according to strict ethical principles and which will inform the provision of appropriate and improved services for an increasingly diverse society.



## **We urge political parties, in their manifestos and policies to ensure:**

**6.** An effort to investigate and prosecute hate crimes and hate speech including those occurring online. This work should include investment in training and resources needed for law enforcement bodies to adequately investigate and prosecute such offences.

**7.** That human rights education and its themes are mainstreamed throughout the Maltese education system, proactively supporting the development of a positive, inclusive and holistic human rights culture within schools and broader society.

**8.** A commitment to Malta increasing its annual Official Development Assistance contribution with a strong focus on Malta's contribution towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. This should include setting up the necessary structures for ongoing development of human resources, effectiveness-based modelling for interventions using the DAC principles, and evidence-based in-country initiatives.

**9.** Mainstreaming of human rights standards in the work of the government across its various branches and in all its programmes and projects. Such efforts shall include a commitment towards human rights training for governmental officials and a human rights impact assessment of all new legislative and policy measures.

**10.** The development of an ongoing and open dialogue with civil society organisations including non-governmental organisations as a key practice in developing and upholding a more participative, inclusive and accepting society, especially on issues that are politically and socially sensitive.



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