

Founded 1964

N-Mara

Newsletter of the National Council of Women - Malta



NCW hosts the 4th Congress of the Small States of Europe



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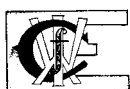
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International Council of Women

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Motto: "Do unto others as ye would
that they should do unto you."



European Centre of the International Council of Women

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IL-Mara

NEWSLETTER OF THE NATIONAL COUNCIL OF WOMEN - MALTA

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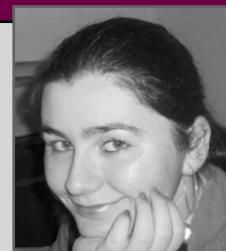
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EDITORIAL

Dear Colleagues,

As another year flies by, I remain astounded with the amount of work done by the National Council of Women. One must remember that a large amount of this work is done voluntarily. Busy women with professional jobs and families, somehow manage to find time to do NCW work. Moreover, many women also do voluntary work with other organisations. I, for one, am also active with The Richmond Foundation, volunteering with the Never Mind Leisure Centre.



With the beginning of the educational year, it is important to remember the splendid advances women have made in the field of education. It is through education that women can achieve an equal status. Queen Victoria, from her privileged, comfortable position was not a firm believer in this, and went as far as to say: "I am most anxious to enlist everyone who can speak or write to join in checking this mad, wicked folly of 'Women's Rights'", ultimately saying that mobility for women, through education, is out of the question.

One wonders why it was considered so scary to educate women - Were they going to 'steal' jobs from men? Were they going to stop caring for their families and children? Education is important because it presents women with the option to do whatever they please in life, rather than be forced to follow one route. Education is a direct bus to Independence. Today, unlike the past, higher education does not belong to the upper echelons of society. Education is available to all, and in Malta, we are even luckier, as most higher education, be it at the University of Malta or MCAST is free. Unfortunately this is not the same all over the world.

I need not repeat the oft mentioned horror stories, but unfortunately true ones, of young girls who have no proper access to education because of their sex. To conclude, I must say that education is not just important for women, but for the entire population. It is only through education that humanity can better itself, live in harmony and not surrender to extremist methods of thought.

I wish you all a pleasant scholastic year and a very early Merry Christmas, 🍷

Maria Giuliana Fenech

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



Dear Colleagues and friends,

We are already in the last quarter of the year 2009. It has been a busy year. We hardly had time to stop as we moved on from one activity to another, from one issue to another.

I cannot but mention the global economic crisis that has affected Malta also, albeit not as badly as other countries. NCW is following developments and the negative impact on employment, in particular on how women are being affected especially those who work part-time and those in self-employment.

As we do every year, we submitted budget proposals and were frequently present in consultation meetings recommending the importance of flexicurity measures to ease the effects of the crisis and to ensure that women do not bear the brunt of the financial crisis.

September and October were months full of important meetings in Brussels organised by the European Commission and the European Economic and Social Committee where we were debating the role of women in the economy, poverty and work and the upcoming second Ministerial Conference on Women in the Euromed, under the Swedish Presidency to take place in Marrakech, Morocco in November.

We are looking forward to the ratification of the

Lisbon Treaty as events unfold after the Irish vote. This is very important as we will be working on putting into practice structured consultation for civil society, since the principle of participative democracy is enshrined in the Treaty.

In the EESC September Plenary, we were addressed by Commission President José Manuel Barroso and Commissioner Spidla for Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities on measures to safeguard jobs in the current crisis and the importance of vocational training and lifelong learning.

However, by far the most important event of NCW was the hosting of the Congress for Women in the Small States of Europe. For this I personally wish to thank our General Secretary Doris Bingley who was the key person in the success of this event. I also wish to thank all NCW members who participated in the Congress and in all the preparations it entailed (See inside pages).

We are now preparing for the AGM, which will include evaluating our work for 2009, elections of Executive Committee members and sub-committees and resolutions for 2010 to be approved by the Assembly.

We urge you all to be involved. NCW needs the talents and expertise of all its members and we look forward to meeting you in the forthcoming Christmas events, which will be announced to you in this issue and later on.

My best wishes to you all 🌸

Grace Attard, President

Stqarrija għall-Istampa - Il-Hatra ta' Zewg Magistrati Nisa

Il-Kunsill Nazzjonali tan-Nisa jifrah lill-Avukat Claire Stafrace Zammit u lill-Avukat Gabriella Vella għall-hatra tagħhom bħala Magistrat, li n-nomina tagħhom giet approvata mill-Kabinett kmieni din il-gimgha.

Dan huwa pass iehor il quddiem fejn in-numru ta' nisa qed jizdied fl-oghla karigi tal-gudikatura biex jigi indirizzat il-glass ceiling anki f'dan il-qasam u li juri wkoll kemm qed jigi rikonoxxut il-livell għoli li l-mara Maltija qeghda tilhaq bil-

kapacitajiet tagħha.

Għall-Kunsill tan-Nisa dan ifisser li s-socjeta' Maltija se tgawdi mill-impenn ta' dawn iz-zewg avukati, fejn il-perspettiva tal-mara tista tagħti kontrubut siewi b'mod demokratiku. Il-Kunsill jittama li firxa aktar wiesa ta' nisa jsibu posthom f'aktar postijiet fejn jittiehdu d-decizjonijiet f'oqsma ohra bħal fil-politika u fl-ekonomija u anki f'karigi f'livelli ewropej u internazzjonali. 🌸



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My Breast Cancer Journey

"My cancer journey started in August 1999, when I found a lump in my right breast. At first I could not believe that this was something serious, as I had my mammogram just 3 months before and everything was normal.

My friend came with me to the radiologist because I did not want to worry my family. Unfortunately the result showed that the lump I had was malignant and had to come out! In just one week I had a mastectomy and started on my cancer journey, chemotherapy, radiotherapy and 5 years of drug treatment.

I wanted to give something back to all the people who had helped me throughout my treatment so I joined The Breast Care Support Group ED Malta, of which, at the moment I am the President. I feel that something good has come



out of my illness because when people see the way I carried on with my normal life style they are encouraged not to give up."

This is the story that was presented at the the launch of the ECPC (European Cancer Patient Coalition) European Partnership Action Against Cancer. The Breast Care Support Group 'Europa Donna' is also a member of ECPC and as a non profit-making NGO we work hard to raise awareness on Breast Cancer.

Many aspects of general health can be improved and many cases of cancer prevented, if we adopt healthier lifestyles, for example:

- Avoid smoking.
- Avoid obesity, watch what you eat.
- Undertake some brisk exercise every day, like walking for at least half an hour.
- Try to eat at least 5 servings of fruit and vegetables daily, and limit your intake of foods containing fats from animal sources.
- If you drink alcohol, whether beer, wine or spirits, moderate your consumption to two drinks per day if you are a man or one drink per day if you are a woman;
- Care should be taken to avoid excessive sun exposure. It is specifically important to protect children and adolescents.
- Attending cancer screening may also increase the chance of early detection and curing

cancer. Women aged 50 and 59 should participate in breast cancer screening.

• When a woman receives an appointment to go for her mammogram, make sure to do so, this will be a routine check up and does not mean that there is breast cancer.

The earlier the diagnosis, the earlier the treatment.

More advice can be found on the website of the European Code against Cancer :

www.cancercode.org or http://ec.europa.eu/health/index_en.htm.

For more information please contact The Breast Care Support Group 'Europa Donna' on

breastcaresupportgroup@gmail.com

Helpline 9999 4666 21 482 602

Website: www.bebreastaware.org



Gertrude Abela



NCW Press Release - Breast Screening – a lifeline for women

The National Council of Women welcomes the long awaited breast screening programme that the Council has been pushing for in line with WHO requirements for many years

The Council also welcomes the measures being taken to ensure high standards of the services offered. It also welcomes measures for a better quality of life through the provision of silicone prosthesis in the near future to address both the psychological

and the physical needs of women who have undergone surgery. NCW hopes that it will not be long before younger women will have access to breast screening programmes together with the 50 to 65 high risk age group

In collaboration with the Breast Screening Support Group and the Action for Breast Cancer Foundation, NCW will continue with its initiatives to raise awareness among women who for various reasons hesitate to make

use of these services. One of the forthcoming initiatives is a talk entitled 'Breast Care – Life after Breast Cancer' on 2 October at 6.30 pm, organised by NCW and Europa Donna Malta at NCW Centre, Blata l-Bajda (near Merlin Library). NCW urges women of all ages to attend so that they are better informed when taking decisions about their health (for further information contact NCW on 21 248881 or 21 246982) ♥

Integrating Young People in Society and Working Life

At the Spring European Council of 22 - 23 March, 2005, the EU Heads of State and Government adopted a 'European Youth Pact'.

Four principal issues were identified:

- the vulnerability of young people;
- the need to develop solidarity across generations, in an ageing society;
- the need to equip young people through their education and training;
- the need for better coherence across all policy areas that concern young people.

In response to the Spring Council Conclusions, the European Commission adopted a package of guidelines including Broad Economic Policy Guidelines and the Employment Guidelines with the aim to co-ordinate the employment policies of the member states. In the latter guidelines specific reference is made to the Youth Social Pact. The Employment Guidelines stress the importance of building employment pathways for young people. Young people are more at risk of unemployment and, if at work of low income

Recommendations

Employment

NCW stresses the need

- for more effective initiatives for the reduction of youth unemployment – minimum of 50% in the period 2006-2010
- to reduce the number of early school leavers, increase access to initial vocational, secondary and higher education including apprenticeships and entrepreneurship training
- to speed up the development of frameworks to support the transparency of qualifications, their effective recognition and their validation of non-formal and informal learning
- to devise schemes for knowledge transfer so that older workers' skills and wide experience over many years can be passed on in such a way that younger people are happy to take "old" knowledge on board and make it a part of their "new" body of knowledge, both for their own benefit and the benefit of their company

- to improve measures to promote the social inclusion of young people, in particular to combat the problem of young people who are not in education, training, employment or registered as unemployed
- set targets to reduce the gender gap as regards vocational and technological training and wage differences at the time of recruitment
- promote the importance of foreign language competence in improving education and employment opportunities as well as mobility of young people
- foster young entrepreneurship by providing financial and technical



support and providing the necessary measures for these initiatives at tertiary education level to encourage transferring and establishing of an enterprise

Active Participation in Society

Priority should be given to the active participation and autonomy of young people not only in the labour market but in society at large and the contribution to the personal development of young people and the skills, values and attitudes that young people gain, and to their sense of initiative and their social integration

Recommendations

- the recognition of youth work activities including their contribution to voluntary work in a wide range of areas at different levels, that also make it possible for social welfare services to make them less costly
- that greater consideration is given to young people in disadvantaged situations who do not have access to high quality education, leisure

facilities and access to information especially regarding opportunities.

- that the MCESD to become more involved in order to make it easier for young people to participate in national consultation procedures and to exchange best practices regarding the role of young people within their organisations and
- that Government to strengthen consultation structures with young people and their organisations on policies that affect them

An employability programme for early school leavers

Very often early school leavers who come from unstable socio-economic environments have illiteracy problems, a history of absenteeism and in many cases challenging behaviour.

- It is recommended that programmes providing employability skills should include personal and social development modules to develop self-esteem, responsibility, teamwork (soft skills) etc.
- An analysis with the participants of the profiles of the jobs on the market and identifying individual skills and competencies as well as constraints should be carried out in line with the EU 'Future Skills for Future Jobs' (see CEDEFOP)
- Specific areas of future labour market requirement should be targeted also from a gender perspective in response to the realities of the labour market, to encourage placements in the right jobs.
- Methods of participative learning and experiential learning away from classroom methods should also be used, besides work-related knowledge and skills. The programme should be extended to 9 (nine) months. Incentives such as 'pocket money' subject to set criteria would encourage more participation. Whilst the support of employers is necessary for a successful outcome, these programmes can be implemented in collaboration with NGOs, as is currently being done in the case of other age groups

Grace Attard,
NCW President,
EESC member

NCW Recommendations on Pre-Budget 2010



The National Council of Women notes that the Pre-Budget 2010 Consultation document while seeking to avoid economic pitfalls, is aiming at sustaining the health and social systems in an attempt to build

stability – indeed not an easy task in the current circumstances

The Council notes that government has remained on track in its policies to increase the participation rate of women in the labour market, focusing more on family-friendly measures rather than financial incentives that have been introduced in previous budgets. Budget proposals are pushing for more widely used flexible working hours in the public sector.

Besides increasing pre-school facilities, government is introducing after-school programmes for children of primary

school age in three different localities to compliment formal learning. Children stand to gain from activities that help them develop their talents and offer the possibility of catching up in subjects where they lag behind. NCW would like to see such programmes extended to other localities in the future. Parents, in particular mothers can organize their working time better and in certain circumstances move into full time posts or take up better paid jobs that cannot be offered on a part-time basis

The Council also welcomes the ETC Gender Equality Action Plan, in particular the introduction of a scheme making it possible for mothers who have just given birth to extend their maternity leave from 14 weeks to 18 weeks.

NCW is aware that our economy will be facing a tough time in the first months of 2010 and therefore the proposed measures should encourage the private sector to make use of flexicurity policies to offer attractive choices for women seeking employment, not least in higher paid jobs, harnessing their labour force by ensuring employees are up to the mark for economic growth to face future competition.

However, NCW believes more needs to be done for self-employed women who cannot make full use of social benefits such as maternity and sick leave as due to the intrinsic nature of their work, cannot afford to stay away from work for long, especially in the case of small enterprises. SMEs are the backbone of our economy; at the same time they offer the basis for, the much needed creation of new jobs

In the forthcoming budget, NCW would like to see particular attention given to the development of strong policies that focus on future skills for future jobs in areas such as ITC, alternative energy and health and long-term care which should be Malta's future sectors for economic growth and job creation.

The Council, in its recommendations is also looking ahead at 2010 as the European Year to combat Poverty and Social Exclusion 2010 and therefore it is crucial that Budget 2010 will address 'in-work' poverty to identify the specific financial needs of all types of families in Malta who are at risk of poverty

Report of NCW EU Affairs Committee for AGM General- 31 January 2009

The aim of the Committee is to study EU documents, in particular those related to Gender Equality and to the dissemination of information through the various NCW publicity channels and the media in general.

Chairperson : Grace Attard;
Rapporteur Marlene Housley

Members: Ingrid Azzopardi, Mariosa Vella Cardona - legal consultant on EU Matters, Annabelle Busuttill, Jeanette Farrugia, Diane Xuereb, M'Therese Zammit (currently studying abroad)

The First NCW EU Affairs Committee meeting was held on Friday 6 June 2008 at NCW Centre Blata l Bajda. During the meetings, the members discussed the **Roadmap for Equality between Women and Men 2006-2010**, with the aim of studying at what stage of compliance Malta is with its various aspects. It was decided that resolutions for AGM should reflect shortcomings in Malta's current status in so far as the areas identified in the Roadmap are concerned.

The Committee also discussed the Commission package on Family Friendly Measures and the Eurofound research on pay gap. The latter states that in Malta the pay gap is 18% and not 4% as stated by NSO. On behalf of NCW, Dr. Mariosa Vella Cardona sent a press release, commenting on the recent legislative package relating to family friendly measures published by the EU Commission with reference to

the local situation. Dr Vella Cardona, also published an article on the proposed Directive on Temporary Workers, which will give such workers equal rights to full time employees

The Gender dimension in the Lisbon Strategy was also discussed. A resolution on the Lisbon strategy has been submitted for approval by the AGM. The portrayal of women in the media was also discussed and proposal for a resolution was submitted for approval by AGM. As part of the initiatives to raise awareness of domestic violence, an article was published in the local media on Children as Indirect Victims of Domestic Violence across the EU and with particular reference to the Maltese situation.

Meeting of NGOs from the Western Balkans - In November, Grace Attard was invited by the EU Commission to speak about the Roadmap to Women in Business NGOs from the Western Balkans. These included Bosnia, Kosovo, Former Republic of Yugoslavia, Albania.

Commission meetings on Gender Equality in the Euromed – Follow up of the Istanbul Ministerial Conclusions -As EESC member, Grace Attard participated in two Commission meetings on Women in the Economy in the Euromed and Women in Political Life in the Euromed

Other initiatives include Enhancing NCW work with the Anna Lindh Foundation Network and a Seminar

with the Russian Centre for Science and Culture.

Dr Mariosa Vella Cardona participated in the Conference entitled WOMEN AND MEN: SUPPLY AND DEMAND held in Budapest between the 11th and 12th December 2008. The ARETUSA member organisations discussed various themes including the prevention of sexual exploitation in EU countries, women in politics and women within the labour market. NCW Malta is one of the founder member organisations of this network.

EuroMed Summit for Economic and Social Councils and Similar Institutions 2008 -

In November, Grace Attard participated in the Euromed Summit, held in Rabat, Morocco. At the end of the Summit, by means of a Final Declaration, the members present committed themselves to a number of initiatives including The role of civil society participation in the "Barcelona Process: Union for the Mediterranean" and Ensuring Access by Women to Economic and Social life.

The Committee members regularly discuss EU Commission documents that are published for consultation from time to time. The members of the EU Affairs Committee also publish articles and press releases in local newspapers on EU issues that are relevant to Malta. ♡

**Grace Attard,
EU Affairs Committee co-ordinator**

Future Skills for Future Jobs

Anticipating labour market and skills needs

The need to address Labour Market Skills Issues at European level

Europe, potentially, faces a major skills problem in the near future. Over **20 million new jobs** are expected to be created between 2006 and 2020. **Another 85 million jobs will be available to replace people who retire or leave the labour market** for other reasons.

Although more jobs and more job opportunities are forecast, **the working age population will fall by around six million**. While there is the possibility of oversupply in some areas, there is considerable evidence of increasing needs for, and even shortages of, people with adequate levels of qualification in many areas.

The Lisbon employment rate target of 70 % by 2010 could prove to be far too low for 2020. **In just over a decade an employment rate of around 74 % will be required to avoid a possible shortage in the workforce** due to different occupational structures and potential skill gaps.

Europe needs to do more to anticipate changing skill needs. Information on skill needs at national level is no longer enough. A European labour market requires European-level information. In November 2007, the Education Council adopted a resolution on 'New Skills for new jobs'

This request has been taken up in the June 2008 Council conclusions 'Anticipating and matching labour market need with special emphasis on Youth – a jobs and skills initiative' and asked the European Commission for a comprehensive assessment of Europe's future skills requirements up to 2020, taking account of technological change and an ageing population, and to propose ways to anticipate future needs

Employment Trends by 2020 Services Sector still expanding

The skill needs forecast uses a model to project demand by occupation and qualification, and replacement demand

The **general shift** away from the primary sector (especially agriculture) and traditional

manufacturing industries **towards services and the knowledge intensive economy** is a trend likely to continue as a key feature in Europe over the coming decade.

Around 29 million new jobs by 2020

The forecast 20.3 million additional jobs between 2006 and 2020 in the EU-25+ (EU-25 plus Norway and Switzerland) comes despite the loss of well over three million jobs in the primary sector and almost 0.8 million in manufacturing. Almost three quarters of jobs in EU-25+ in 2020 will be in services.

The construction sector tends to stagnate with less than half a million jobs between 2006 and 2020. **Distribution, transport, hotels and catering together are projected to see employment growth by more than 4.5 million in the next decade, while non-marketed services are expected to increase by slightly more than 4.9 million . Business and miscellaneous services** have the best prospects with more than 14 million additional jobs being created between 2006 and 2020. Consequently almost three quarters of jobs in the EU 25 in 2020 will be in services



Workforce shortages

Due to **the need to replace people leaving the labour market, there will be significant numbers of job openings even in the primary and manufacturing sectors.**

In addition to 20.3 million new jobs created between 2006 and 2020, another 85 million jobs (four times more) will be available to replace workers who retire or leave the labour market. The total number of job openings therefore will be 105.3 million in EU 25 between 2006 and 2020

It is important that policy-makers, education and training

providers, guidance services and citizens are aware that these sectors will remain crucial components of the economy and viable sources of jobs.

Projected sectoral changes, as well as changes in **how work is organised and jobs are performed**, will significantly affect the occupational skills needed in the future. However, **the nature of many jobs and their skill requirements will change.**

Polarised job growth: high-skill, low-skill

Currently, almost 40 % of people work in higher-level occupations such as management, professional work, or technical jobs. Expansion of high- and medium level skilled occupations is expected to continue over the next decade.

An increase is also projected for some jobs requiring no or lower level skills such as elementary occupations, defined as jobs that consist of simple and routine tasks that require basic education to carry them out. In contrast, there will be fewer jobs for agricultural skilled workers, clerks and craft and related trades workers

The forecast focuses on three levels (high, medium and low qualifications). The results highlight the general increase in qualification levels across most jobs and all occupational categories – including those at the lowest rung of the skill-occupation ladder. The forecast points to elementary jobs being increasingly occupied by workers with mainly medium qualifications.

Consequently, at the broadest level, the projected changes are even more dramatic for qualification levels than occupations.

In total, the net employment increase in Europe of over 20 million jobs between 2006 and 2020 comprises increases of almost 19.6 million jobs at the highest qualification level (graduate and post-graduate qualifications, including vocational equivalents) and almost 13.1 million jobs at medium level (upper- and post-secondary level, especially vocational qualifications).

This is offset by a sharp decline of almost 12.5 million jobs for those with no or low formal qualifications and 50% medium qualifications. Demand for low qualifications will fall from a third in 1996 to 18.5 %

(cont. on page 14)



Investing in Women

Presentation by Helga Ellul CEO Playmobil, President, Malta Chamber of Commerce, Enterprise and Industry, NCW Vice-President

4th Congress for Women Organisations Representatives from the Eight Small States of Europe

Hon Minister/s Ladies and Gentlemen

For me, to invest in Women is not a question but a must. In fact, the importance of Investing in Women cannot be overstated if we want to advance in economic growth. Women will and have to be a part of that growth. There has been considerable progress but there is still a wealth of untapped potential in women. Today still, in virtually all parts of the world, the gender gap remains.

A few facts: As widespread and uncontroversial as the case for women's economic empowerment has become, today women own only one percent of the world's wealth, have only a 10 percent share in global income, and occupy just 14 percent of leadership positions in the private and public sector. And, while women produce half of the world's food, they own a mere one percent of its land.

Investing in women is called by the World Bank "smart economics" and research shows that economic growth for women has an important multiplier effect. Women are more likely to share their economic gains with their families and communities at large. I believe this Investment in women is just smart business. Equipping women



Ms Esther Eghobamien, Head of Gender Section, Commonwealth Secretariat; Elin Nordahl - Iceland; Grace Attard NCW President and Dr Marthese Portelli, Director at Wasteserv Malta; President of the MNPN

from all backgrounds with the education, skills and support systems necessary to be successful managers, business leaders and entrepreneurs is one of the most important means to ensuring economic growth.

Countries that have achieved the highest levels of gender equality, have profited not just in terms of greater social justice and stability, but also in terms of their economic growth and competitiveness. To improve the lot of humanity we need to begin by acknowledging that progress for women is progress for all.

However, when we talk about equality between men and women it is important to talk about flexicurity strategies. If we look at the EU perspective, women have a vital role to play to deal with change effectively and confront Europe's demographic challenge. Just take the eight million jobs that have been created in the EU since the launch of the EU's Lisbon Strategy for Growth and Jobs in 2000, 6 million of these have been taken by women. This is perhaps one of the greatest contributions this strategy has so far achieved. Still women face many barriers to realise their full potential. Even though the number of women completing higher education now exceeds men (even here in Malta) their employment rate remains 15% lower than men's and they continue to face a pay gap of 15%. The increase in female employment is mainly in jobs which are already dominated by women and so they are generally less well paid, and women face greater difficulties in reaching decision-making positions, the so-called Glass Ceiling.

What are the barriers? If we look at the

employment rate for women aged 20-49 it falls by 15 % when they have a child, while that of men increases by 6 %. Another point is that women are more engaged into part-time work, in the region of 30% compared to 8% men. These differences are mainly due to the lack of childcare provision, financial factors, career setbacks, and finding a work life balance whilst raising a family.

Looking at countries where women participate actively in all aspects of economic, social and political life, one notices that well established work-home reconciliation policies are the norm. The most important three areas are financial support to cover family related costs, high quality care services for children and dependant older people, and flexible working hours with appropriate leave arrangements.

If we do not find the right policies, then what chance does a woman have of working and becoming economically independent if the key issue of reconciling professional, private and family life always has to be resolved by concessions on her part.

The situation in Malta. The fact is that in Malta we are quite below the European Average of women participating in the labour market. Slight increases have been noticed in the participation of women in the labour market recently. The report from the EU Commission ranks Malta 25th out of the 27 EU member states when it comes to providing child care facilities. Not only do we need to increase such facilities but to provide them also in summer time and on a round the clock basis to assist shift workers.

It is still part of the fabric of Maltese culture that the role of men and women are stereo typed. The men being the bread winner and the women taking care of the family and home. In relation to this, a recent study included in the 2010 Pre-Budget Document reveals that women with low or medium levels of

What we need to do. We need to encourage our young generation, male and female to enter into new family responsibility as a single family unit. We need to encourage them to achieve the right family balance together and that there is no such thing as the husband's and wife's sole responsibility. Building a family, bringing children to the world and raising them to high standards is a joint responsibility of both parents. It does not mean the father carries on with his working life irrespective and the mother must carry the lion's share of duties and responsibilities. We have already progressed in this regard but in order to develop further we need to support young couples by ensuring that the necessary facilities and appropriate structures are well in place such as child care facilities as well as caring for older family members.

We need to encourage employers that flexibility and providing innovative work arrangements can be beneficial to the business as well as the worker. Best practice examples in Corporate Social Responsibility across Europe and in Malta show how entrepreneurs have already seen the benefits from new work patterns such as teleworking, job sharing or generally more flexible working conditions.

The one word you are hearing right now is "flexibility". But this is necessary if you want to retain women in today's workforce. We cannot afford to lose the potential of 60% of women who are still away from the labour market. We have talked



Participants from the Small States of Europe and NCW members during one of the panel discussions

about these issues time and time again and we need more actions.

But again I cannot but stress more that the base of equality has to start in the concept of an equal partnership between husband and wife. Sharing - "for better and for worse" - is, after all, at the core of what marriage stands for.

Conclusion

I have used the term glass ceiling earlier on in relation to women's chances of career progression. To my mind, and in line with what I have expanded upon throughout this contribution there is another important application for this term.

The country faces a glass ceiling in terms of its economic expansion potential UNLESS women are given full encouragement to contribute to the economy - this holds true even at the global level. As I explained, making opportunities equally available for both sexes (on paper) is not enough. We need to ensure that the right frameworks are in place to enable women with family responsibilities to truly be in a position to consider such demanding positions. If we manage to embrace this notion and take active measures to succeed, our country will be more productive and technically more competent. Ultimately, we will be all better off. 🌸



Mrs Helga Ellul, CEO Playmobil, President, Malta Chamber of Commerce, Enterprise and Industry, NCW Vice-President presenting her speech on Investing in Women

education earn around 15 per cent less than men. In absolute terms, the difference equates to around €2,000. In the case of people with a higher level of education, the percentage difference between men and women is above 20% - equivalent to around €5000.

Besides, data for Malta shows that men - across varying education levels - enjoy an upward growth in income throughout their working lives pattern of growth. The trend in gross annual salaries for women appears much more stagnant. This applies both to women with low and higher levels of education.

It is this traditional family model which has held back highly skilled females from embracing a career plus a family. For that to accelerate, a change of mind has to be set. This can already be seen in the younger generation - that a family is a partnership, where both partners can grow career wise, where finances are settled together and children's parental duties are shared by both

4th Congress of the Small States of Europe

The Role of Gender Equality in the Small States of Europe



The National Council of Women of Malta hosted the 4th UNESCO Congress for Women Organisations from the Eight Small States of Europe from the 24 to 27 September 2009 at The Palace Hotel, Sliema.

Present were representatives from Andorra, Cyprus, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Monaco and San Marino. Keynote Speaker was Ms. Esther Eghobamien, Head of Gender Section, Social Transformation Programmes Division, Commonwealth Secretariat whose topic was "Engaging with the Recovery Process Towards Gender Equality and Sustainable Societies"

NCW Grace Attard welcomed the guests at the opening ceremony with the Hon Dr Louis Galea, Speaker of the House of Representatives officially opening the congress in the presence of the British High Commissioner H.E. Ms Louise Jane Stanton, the German Ambassador H.E. Mr Bernd Braun and H.E. Mr Douglas W Kmiec, Ambassador to the United States of America. Also present were the first lady Ms Margaret Abela, Mrs Catherine Gonzi spouse of the Prime Minister and Mrs Michelle Muscat spouse of the Leader of the Opposition.

The aim of the Congress was to discuss the contribution of women in social and economic areas, in particular in the global financial crisis and its aftermath. The sharing of good practice enabled all participating countries to achieve better results. The debates focused on women's evolving role in the economy, in decision-making, intercultural dialogue, education, empowerment, in the eradication of violence and the environment in line with EU and international developments

NCW Malta strongly believes that there should be cross pollination of ideas between women's organisations of all regions.

The sessions focused on the following with Cross Cutting Areas – women, youth, the elderly, persons with disability, in the context of globalisation, the EU and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) as priorities:

- General information on Gender Equality and how it relates to Small States
- Structured involvement of civil society at national level
- Sharing of good practice
- Opportunities to identify national, regional and global fora on related issues.

The Maltese Experts who contributed to the success of this Congress were: Dr Marthese Portelli, Director at Wasteserv Malta Ltd on Social Implications in Economic Development; Dr Joanna Drake, Head of Representation EU Malta Office; Ms Michelle Mallia, President of the Nationalist Party Women's Movement on Women in Political Decision Making; The Hon Justyne Caruana on Challenges & Opportunities for Women;

Mrs Helga Ellul, CEO Playmobil, President, Malta Chamber of Commerce, Enterprise and Industry, NCW Vice-President; Mr Edwin Calleja, European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) Maltese Member on Economic Development – National & European Perspective; Mr Paul A. Attard, President, Board of Governors, MCAST, and Policy Advisor, Ministry of Education, Culture, Youth and Sport on Education for a More Equitable Society; Dr Sue Vella, CEO, The Employment and Training Corporation (ETC) Malta; Mr Gejtu Vella, Secretary General UHM; Mr Joseph Farrugia, Director General, Malta Employer's Association on Employment Opportunities for Women; Dr Paul Pace, Director, Environmental Education & Research, University of Malta; Mrs Nadyanne Mangion, NCW Malta Health co-ordinator; Mr Vince Attard, CEO Nature Trust, Malta on Sustainable Development

Representatives from each State gave an overview of issues relating to the advancement of

women in their Countries.

NCW Executive members moderated the sessions and acted as rapporteurs.

Cultural visits were organised for the overseas delegates.

NCW Malta would like to thank UNESCO, Air Malta, Malta Tourism Authority, Meridiana Wine Estate, Farsons and Athenaeum Spa by Algoterm for their generous support.

Doris Bingley
Hon Gen Secretary

L-ISPEAKER LOUIS GALEA JAPPOĠĠJA L-ISFORZI GHAD-DJALOGU U L-KONSSENSU FI HDAN L-MCESD.



The Hon. Dr. Louis Galea, Speaker of the House of Representatives at the Official Opening of the Congress

L-iSpeaker tal-Kamra tad-Deputati Dott. Louis Galea sahaq dwar il-bżonn ta' djalogu u konsensus ġenwini biex is-soċjetà Maltija tagħmel il-qabża ta' kwalità li jmiss fl-iżvilupp tal-pajjiż u tegħleb l-isfida tar-riċessjoni ekonomika li hakmet lid-dinja. "Din il-qabża ta' kwalità ma tistax isehh minghajr tlietliet ta' impenn totali u konkret favur it-tishib shih tal-mara Maltija f'kull aspett tal-iżvilupp soċjali, ekonomiku, kulturali u politiku."

Louis Galea sostna dan meta dalghodu inawgura r-Raba' Kungress tal-Organizzazzjonijiet tan-Nisa tal-Istati għar fl-Ewropa li qed jiġi ospitat mill-Kunsill Nazzjonali tan-Nisa (KNN) fil-Palace Hotel f'Tas-Sliema. Il-Kungress, presedut minn Grace Attard, Presidente tal-KNN, qed jipprovi jumejn ta' diskussjoni fuq it-tema ġenerali "The Role of Gender Equality in the Small States of Europe". Il-Kungress ġie indirizzat ukoll minn diversi esperti u kelliema, Maltin u barranin, li jirrapreżentaw oqsma u interessi diversi.

L-iSpeaker Louis Galea qal li huwa jappoġġja l-isforzi li l-unjoni u min iħaddem, flimkien mas-soċjetà civili, ġew rapportati li qed jagħmlu fi hdan il-Kunsill Maltin għall-iżvilupp Ekonomiku u Soċjali bit-tama li jintlaħaq l-aħjar konsensus possibbli dwar l-istrategġja u l-miżuri li fuqhom jista' jkun mibni l-Budget li jmiss. Huwa emfasizza li d-djalogu u l-konsensus miksub dwar strategġja ta' importanza nazzjonali qatt ma jdagħġifu anzi jsaħħu l-partijiet soċjali u politiki li jkun sawruh. "Il-kompetizzjoni politika għall-aħjar programm tkun aktar sana u aktar demokratika meta ssehh f'qafas ta' konsensus fuq il-kwistjonijiet fundamentali għall-iżvilupp u l-progress tal-poplu Malti," sostna Louis Galea.

Louis Galea qal li, wara hafna snin ta' miżuri minn kull naħa biex il-mara tikseb il-post li jitsħoqqilha fis-soċjetà, tajjeb wiehed jirrifletti fejn wasalna u fejn se jrin. "Wiehed mill-aspetti li jittfa' dawl fuq is-sehem tal-mara fis-soċjetà huwa x'livell ta' partecipazzjoni femminili hemm fl-edukazzjoni vokazzjonali u oghla, fis-suq tax-xogħol, u fit-tehid ta' deċizzjonijiet fl-igvernar tal-oqsma kollha tal-pajjiż." Louis Galea spjega li filwaqt li fl-istatistika wiehed jitellem dwar il-fenomenu tal-popolazzjoni inattiva, tajjeb li jkun hemm analiżi kritika ta' dan x'ifisser u x'inhu l-impatt tiegħu fuq is-soċjetà.

L-iSpeaker fisser li min ikun qed jistudja u jitharreg u min qed jerfa' r-responsabbiltà tal-familja, kif qed jagħmlu eluf ta' nisa, ma tistax tgħidli li hu "inattiv". "Huwa żball li l-kontribut tal-mara u tar-raġel fit-trobbija u l-kura tal-familja,

NCW members and guests during the Congress on The role of Women in the Small States of Europe



u l-kontribut tal-volontarjat, għadhom ma ġew aċċettati internazzjonalment li għandom valur finanzjarju li għandu jidhul fil-kalkolu tat-tkabbir tal-ġid nazzjonali, il-GNP u l-GDP."

Louis Galea qal li minn riċerka tal-2004 fl-Ingilterra l-valur tal-hidma tal-volontarjat, fejn il-maġġoranza huma nisa, ġie stmat li jiswa 57 miljun sterlina fis-sena, filwaqt li fil-Kanada jinħadmu aktar minn biljun siegħa xogħol fis-sena mill-volontarjat li ġew kalkolati ekwivalenti għal kwazi 600,000 impjeg full-time. Malta għandha madwar 6,500 persuna jaħdmu fil-volontarjat, b'60% minnhom nisa, filwaqt li 80% ta' dawk li jaħmu part-time mal-volontarjat huma wkoll nisa.

Louis Galea qal li fadal hafna x'isir biex is-soċjetà jkollha l-istrutturi u l-programmi meħtieġa li jwasslu halli nisa u rġiel jieħdu sehem indaqs fil-hidma u l-frott tan-nazzjon. F'Malta qed jittieħdu diversi miżuri biex nersqu lejn din il-mira, fosthom, ir-reviżjoni tal-faxex tat-taxxa, skemi ta' taħriġ, edukazzjoni vokazzjonali inkluziva, miżuri kontra l-abbużi fil-benefiċċji soċjali u fl-ekonomija s-sewda, kreditu tal-kontribut tas-sigurtà soċjali għall-ġenituri dedikati għat-trobbija tal-ulied, inċentivi għal childcare facilities u flexitime. "Dawn u oħrajn kollha huma maħsuba biex tonqos ir-rata ta' inattività fil-popolazzjoni. Iżda hemm bżonn sforz nazzjonali aktar b'saħħtu biex inħaffu l-pass ta' riżultati oħra positivi fil-qasam tal-ugwaljanza bejn in-nisa u l-irġiel. M'hemm dubju li dawn huma miżuri li jisswew il-flus u allura jrid ikun hemm konsensus nazzjonali dwar kif l-aħjar wiehed isolvi t-tensjoni qawwija bejn il-bżonn ta' aktar investment f'dan il-qasam, sew mill-Gvern kif ukoll mill-privat, u min naħa l-oħra, il-kwestjoni tas-sostenibbiltà tal-finanzi pubbliċi, tas-sistema ta' protezzjoni soċjali, u tal-kompetittività ekonomika tal-pajjiż."

L-iSpeaker Louis Galea temm id-diskors tiegħu billi rrefera għar-rapport li tressaq quddiem l-MCESD mill-partijiet soċjali u s-soċjetà civili. Huwa qal li

Participants and NCW members during the guided tour of the Mediterranean Conference Centre.



jaqbel hafna li l-iskop tal-politika soċjali għandu jkun li jsaħħaħ is-sehem tal-familja bħala mezz għat-tishih tal-koeżjoni soċjali. "Iżda l-koeżjoni soċjali timplika b'mod radikali it-tlietliet tal-ugwaljanza bejn il-mara u r-raġel f'kull aspett tal-hajja tas-soċjetà." ❀

SMEs: A favourable business environment: supporting enterprise and job creation

‘Think Small First’: A Small Business Act for Europe

At a time when there is a global financial and economic crisis, it is companies, in particular SMEs that are the most sensitive and at the same time the most important elements in terms of job creation and recovery capacity. SMEs are a crucial part of our economy and a major source of employment, entrepreneurial skills and innovation

NCW Recommendations

- That the European Commission initiates the steps to establish and enact a separate legal framework to specifically address the needs of Small and Medium Sized Business (SMEs).
- The adoption of national legislation to give binding effect to the ‘Think small first’ principle proposed by the EU Commission in its communication ‘Think Small First: A Small Business Act for Europe’ with a view to the specific situation and needs of various types of SMEs (COM(2008) 394 final drawing up a Small Business Act National Plan (separate from the NRP).
- Appointing a national SME envoy charged with both managing implementation of the Small Business Act European style (SBAE) and ensuring that national laws transpose EU legislation that comply with the fundamental principles of Think Small First; (Malta Enterprise).
- Policy measures other than suitable financing that would help SMEs to grow and develop, recognising SMEs as the rule and not the exception.
- The establishment of obligation to ease the administrative burden for companies. More SME-friendly public service through specialised SME training in particular in the VAT department.
- Putting in place the framework conditions to the process of reaching the ambitious 3% of the GDP target for R&D spending in the next five years.
- Pilot measures on energy efficiency for SMEs in particular in the construction sector.
- “Half of the women of the world are in ‘vulnerable



jobs’, that is, they are self-employed in the informal sector or work as unpaid family members” ILO. Falls in public spending increase women’s care burden. There is therefore the need to strengthen the capacity of government to promote gender equality (in this case) through Gender and Trade. The link between poverty and economic empowerment of women should be addressed through Gender responsive Budgets (GRB). Identifying good practice in Gender and alternate trade and investment models (eg: Cyprus, Australia, UK etc). Investment policies need to be based on female values (putting female values into finance).

- The need to increase the rate of women on Boards of State Banks Management, thus ensuring that the specific needs of women entrepreneurs are addressed to increase their participation in economic activity. There is also the need for legal recognition of self-employed separate from employee legislation.
- Addressing obstacles for self-employed women who cannot make full use of social benefits such as maternity and sick leave, who due to the nature of their work cannot stay away from work for long.
- Strengthening the innovation capacity of SMEs by facilitating access to technology and finance, providing innovative support services.
- Improving the availability, access (meeting the needs of working mothers) and quality of adequate training offers for individuals both women and men and the physical infrastructure (roads and transport) to facilitate access to and by clients.
- Nurturing a national entrepreneurial mindset through the National Curriculum at all levels of education for both women and men to encourage risk-taking, innovation and opting for non-traditional choices, involving companies in training and education schemes.
- Ensuring effective and full use of Community instruments, either for the development of regional infrastructures or to support transitions in sectors affected by structural changes through the European Social Fund (ESF) and the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) in particular in the Tourism and Manufacturing Industry.
- Strengthening financial mechanisms by making better use of the European Investment Bank (EIB) in taking part of the risk on the SMEs and to look at ways in which banks in Malta can still further boost the support they provide to SMEs, in particular those run by women, as outlined in the European Commission’s Small Business Act 2008 ((COM(2008) 394 final).
- Organising courses in ICT for small enterprises (such as village groceries, salons etc) to gear them towards setting up ICT facilities to provide facilities

for a better service to clients and to reach a wider consumer range.

- Taking the necessary measures to encourage the development of initiatives in the social economy in particular to attract young people to this sector of the labour market.
- Ensuring that priority is given to educational systems

at all levels to invest in future skills for future jobs in areas such as 'green' jobs, ICT, environment, health and long term care for the elderly to stimulate the creation of new jobs in small and medium enterprises. 🌸

Grace Attard,
NCW President, EESC member

12th edition of the Bice Mizzi Vassallo Competition

The 12th edition of the Bice Mizzi Vassallo Music Competition will be taking place in December 2009. The event is promising to be an interesting experience both for the participants and for those who follow the budding performers in the local musical scene. Participants include both pianists and violinists.

This competition has been existing for many years and is the only one that has survived in Malta and has paved the way for many of our Maltese musicians to study abroad. Musical talent in Malta has become more appreciated and nurtured by many who continue to pursue a future in the musical world. Therefore the music committee will continue to encourage this event and keep working to give more opportunities to talented musicians.

This edition will be dedicated to the memory of Jane Spiteri who has worked very hard to keep this event going. The adjudicating panel will evaluate the participants in an initial session and those satisfying the expectations and standards set, will participate in the final round. This will be held on the 12th December at Sala Isouard, Manoel theatre, Valletta at 18.30hrs and will be open to the public. Tickets will be available from the booking office of the Manoel Theatre.

Corinne Bowman Chairperson

The Malta Unborn Child Movement meets the Swedish Ambassador to Malta

A delegation of Malta Unborn Child Movement - MUCM - which included Ms Grace Attard, president of the National Council of Women, met the Swedish Ambassador to Malta, Ms Ulla Gudmundson, at the Phoenicia Hotel, on 5-10-

09 to request her to pass on MUCM recommendations to the Swedish EU Presidency.

MUCM, made up of 45 Maltese organisations, proposed that, within the context of the priorities assigned to the environment and climate change by the Swedish EU Presidency, climate change will include also climate change in the womb as "the common concern of mankind".

During a very frank conversation with the ambassador which lasted 90 minutes MUCM proposed the setting up of a task group made up of the Swedish Ambassador to Malta or her

representative, a representative of the Maltese government working on Malta's climate change proposal to the United Nations, and a representative of the MUCM to work on concrete recommendations to the Swedish, and successive



EU Presidencies, so that within, and following, the sterling work initiated by the Swedish EU Presidency on Climate Change, the EU, as "a global actor", includes climate change also in the womb and works for the protection from harm, the "sustainable development" and general well-being of 200 million unborn

children, every year, in the EU and the world, and future generations. 🌸

Tony Mifsud Chairperson,
Malta Unborn Child Movement

Health Committee Report 2008



The Health Committee was made up of 12 members namely Dr Mercedes Schembri Wismayer MD co-ordinator, Nadya Ann Mangion - Secretary, Members: Dame Blanche Martin, Mary Jones, Carmen Cilia, Marie Therese Zammit, Mary Rose Zahra, Mary Gaerty, Irma Farrugia Cassano, Maria Cutajar, MUMN Representative, Christine Spiteri Paris, Monica Schranz

Health and Safety in the Home

In October 2008, a talk on Health and Safety in the Home was organised and delivered by Dr Maria Deguara. This talk was well attended and proved very informative, with many queries arising during the question time reserved at the end of the event. Since the talk was aimed at the situations that we women might encounter in the home, it was structured around the main three instances:

Emergencies resulting when young children are present, with emphasis on prevention rather than treatment; general safety around the house; emergencies resulting when elderly women are concerned. During the talk, elementary first aid measures were presented; with the stress being on prevention of accidents with forethought and common sense.

Breast Screening

In October 2008 Dr Mercedes Schembri Wismayer attended a talk on Breast Screening at St Philip's Hospital. The National Breast Screening Programme as announced in the 2007 Government Budget has still not materialised. With breast cancer having killed an average of one woman per week in Malta between 2000 and 2006 – a total of 518 people, it is more than evident that such a programme should have been implemented years ago. This situation being also augmented with various studies having shown that Malta has a very high incidence and mortality rate of breast cancer when compared to other European countries. The Health Committee continues to pressure for the implementation of this programme on a national level, offered free of charge to all Maltese women between the 50-59 year age bracket, as well as earlier for younger women and beyond the age of 59 in line with WHO standards for a better quality of life.

Abortion

The Committee was relentlessly on the alert with regards to proposed attempts to change our Country's laws on abortion as implemented under the Criminal Code since 1981. It was also constantly vigilant as to Dr Rebecca Gomperts and her "abortion ship" visiting the Island or its waters, the ship's new licence, however, holds a number of obstacles to freely offering abortion services. One particular restriction could essentially prevent the ship from operating in the international waters around Malta – it is imperative that this remains so.

Childhood Obesity

The Health Committee also took note that the increasing problem of childhood obesity cannot go un-noticed. In April 2007, consultant paediatric cardiologist Dr Victor Grech, and Victoria Farrugia Sant'Angelo, head of School Health Services conducted a survey (BMI Study) of all five- to six-year-olds in their first year at primary school. Nearly 3,500 children were weighed and measured by school doctors and nurses and their body mass index (BMI) calculated. The results were alarming - according to the criteria established by the Centre of Disease Control 20.6% of girls and 19.9% of boys were found to be overweight while 13.2% of girls and 14.7% of boys were obese.

Thus the Committee strongly supported the State in implementing the School Fruit Scheme and Healthy Eating policy for Schools.

Human Papilloma Virus Vaccine

The NCW Health Committee augured that the Human Papilloma Virus Vaccine be prescribed and on the National programme of free vaccinations provided by the State.

This vaccine prevents infection with certain species of human Papilloma virus associated with the development of cervical cancer. The HPV vaccine is recommended for 11 and 12 year-old girls. It is also recommended for girls and women age 13 through 26 years of age who have not yet been vaccinated or completed the vaccine series. This vaccine is presented in three doses administered two and six months after the initial dose.

As always, prevention is better than cure; study has shown that widespread vaccination has the potential to reduce cervical cancer deaths around the world by as much as two-thirds, if all women were to take the vaccine and if protection turns out to be long-term. In addition, the vaccines can reduce the need for medical care, biopsies, and invasive procedures associated with the follow-up from abnormal Pap smear tests, thus helping to reduce health care costs and anxieties related to abnormal Pap tests and follow-up procedures. This vaccine is already provided by the state free of charge in Australia, Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Greece, South Korea, the UK, and New Zealand. Still, no free HPV vaccine is available in Malta.

Free Herceptin

It was with great satisfaction that after the October 2008 promise to provide free Herceptin to breast cancer patients, the first consignment of the drug finally arrived on the 23rd December. The drug is used to treat HER2 positive breast cancer patients after treatment with other drugs is not effective. Each patient will need about 55 doses a year.

With each vial of the expensive but potentially life-saving drug, costing over €500 per dose, and some women needing several vials every three weeks; this came as the best news so far this year. 🌸

Nadya Anne Mangion
NCW Health Committee



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International Encounters

NCW co-ordinates meeting of Representative of Commonwealth Secretariat and Malta EU Representative in Brussels



Doris Bingley NCW General Secretary and Esther Eghobamien, Head of Gender Section, Commonwealth Secretariat with Claudia Vella, Employment and Social Policy Attache at the Permanent Representation of Malta to the European Union, Brussels

Doris Bingley and Esther Eghobamien had meetings in Brussels with Ms Véronique Arnault, Director of Multilateral Relations and Ms Kristin Arp, member of Commissioner Benita Ferrero-Waldner's private office, to exchange respective areas of work on gender and to discuss prospective areas of collaboration. Another meeting was held with Ms Karjalainen, Mr

Anthony Crasner and Ms Victoria Correa from DG Development. Here they agreed to reinforce contacts and continue to have future dialogue.

Interest was shown in participating in the Commonwealth 9th Women's Affairs Ministerial Meeting (9WAMM) taking place in June 2010. They agreed to contribute to the relevant components of the Commonwealth Plan of Action Mid Term Review (MTR) process. They promised to keep each other informed regarding these important activities and continue to share information, exchange relevant invitations to foster lesson learning and sharing of best practices on gender, especially around the niche areas of both agencies e.g. aid effectiveness, gender responsive budgets, gender management systems etc. Finally, both agencies will work jointly to mobilise EC partner countries to put in place national action plans (NAPs) for UNSCR 1325 & 1820.

A final meeting took place at the Permanent Representation of Malta to brief the Permanent Representative, HE Mr Richard Cachia Caruana with the outcome of the visit.

A MEDITERRANEAN VOYAGE - MALTA ENCOUNTER at the House of Representatives, VALLETTA on 8 - 9 October 2009

On the occasion of the launch of Ulysse 2009, an initiative of the Ambassador of France and writer Daniel Rondeau and supported by the French Minister of Foreign Affairs, Bernard Kouchner, the Speaker of the Maltese House of Representatives, the Hon Dr Louis Galea, and the Secretary General of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Mediterranean, Mr Sergio Piazzzi, teamed up with Ambassador Rondeau to convene a Malta Encounter to reflect on and discuss the Mediterranean Sea. The conference was held in the House of Representatives on Thursday and Friday, 8th and 9th October.

Ulysse 2009 brought together, in Malta, Tunisia, Libya, Cyprus and Lebanon, a number of people coming from all over the Mediterranean who are passionate about Peace and Freedom. Writers and intellectuals, French, Tunisians, Algerians, Maltese, Libyans, Greeks, Cypriots, Lebanese, Egyptians and Turks, French Diplomats and Members of Parliament, travelled from every country to participate in debates, meetings and conferences. Israeli and Palestinian singers performed together in "One Voice".

Ulysse 2009 is not a cruise trip, but rather a symbolic voyage, a literary and political endeavour, to promote the ideas and words that unite both shores of the Mediterranean Sea.



"It is our intention to completely claim our heritage and our share of the future. The Mediterranean washes upon the shores of three continents. Our sea, as a medium of communication, has taught us to give and take, to convey, to question ourselves without manichaeism, to evolve distinct cultural frameworks inside a world which has remained as intricate as it was in the time of Homer and Virgil. The Mediterranean, its knowledge, laws and beliefs, its three monotheistic religions, its respect for nature and beauty, for the sacred and reason, have always radiated out far beyond its shores and embraced the entire human experience. Our aim is not to strengthen one civilisation to the detriment of another, nor to disregard anyone or anything, but simply to assert, as we look towards our future, that it represents wisdom and freedom, an idea that we feel is indispensable for the future of the world".

This voyage was held on board the French military ship, La Meuse. It started in Valletta. For two days, on the 8th and 9th of October, conferences and debates were organised at the House of Representatives, within the precincts of the Grand Master's Palace. Jacques Barrot, Vice-President of the European Commission, responsible for justice, freedom and security, was in Malta for the occasion. A special guest was Hon. Rudy Salles (French National Assembly), President of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Mediterranean.

Doris Bingley, Cecilia Xuereb and Rita Camilleri represented the National Council of Women Malta. ♥

(cont. from page 7)

Although most additional jobs over the period 2006-20 will require high-level qualifications, **most job openings (new jobs plus jobs open to replace people leaving the labour market) are expected to require medium-level qualifications**, which traditionally include vocational qualifications. Some 55 million, nearly 58 % of the forecast total of 105 million job openings, will be at medium-level. Many of these jobs will require vocational Qualifications

Of the remaining job openings, almost 41 million jobs may require high-level qualifications. Less than 10 million jobs will be open for applicants with no or low level qualifications. **To meet this demand the current qualification structure of the workforce needs to change in the coming decade.**

Policy implications

- Based on these findings, overall demand for skills is likely to continue to rise.
- The young generation entering the labour market in the next decade cannot fulfil all the labour market skill needs.
- For Europe to remain competitive, policies need to be in place to ensure that the workforce can adapt to these requirements. Europe needs a strategy to satisfy the demands of the service-oriented knowledge-intensive economy.
- People must be able to adjust their skills constantly to continual labour market change. This has implications for education and training and lifelong learning.
- A consistent and ambitious strategy is required that reduces the flow of early school leavers and dropouts, establishes a comprehensive skills plan for adults/adult learning and which increases the supply of people trained in science and technology, as well as vocational fields.
- Education and training systems also need to be equitable to reach those who need to improve their skills, but often face barriers to participating in learning. Skills obtained outside the formal education system, whether at work, during leisure time, or abroad, need to be visible and properly valued.
- It is important to validate and accredit people's knowledge, skills and competences, irrespective of how they were obtained, particularly those with low-level formal qualifications, older workers, people with a migrant background and returners to the labour market. Otherwise, we waste skills, failing to make the best use of those we have. Common European tools, principles and mechanisms developed in the Education and training 2010 work programme need to be part of such packages.
- However, education and training measures alone cannot solve the

potential problem of a major skill shortage in Europe. Projected occupational change requires Europe to maximise the employment potential of its workforce.

- This has implications for employment, enterprise, migration, mobility and social policies in Member States. Employment and social policy measures need to be more flexible to provide more support for those needing to change their job.
- Bringing more women into the labour market and longer working lives are crucial measures for Europe's sustainable future.
- Given the shrinking workforce across the EU and trends in workforce demand, intra-European mobility will not suffice.
- The potential role of migration from outside the EU needs careful examination.
- The forecast results emphasise the need for policymaking to initiate measures in time to prevent, or at least alleviate, risks of skill mismatches (shortages as well as surpluses). There is a need to understand in more detail working conditions, skill and competence requirements and profiles of both precarious and knowledge-intensive job segments.

Uncertainties remain about specific developments in demand for occupations and qualifications, among which is how supply and demand interact. From a policy viewpoint, it is important to know if a skill mismatch is temporary or transitory (short-term labour market frictions that disappear after some time) or a long-term phenomenon requiring targeted action. To answer these and other questions Europe needs to invest in further research and analysis on the early identification of skill needs.

The situation in Malta

Although policy measures are being developed to address labour market and skills needs the following areas need to be given priority

- The role of the MCESD in social dialogue to reach agreement on policies regarding partnerships and on their respective implementation is urgent
- Investing more in research and innovation in particular in private-public partnerships
- Policies on research and innovation for competitiveness
- The need to improve the quality of teacher training programmes cannot be underestimated as proposed by the EU Commission and COM (2007) 392 final (see also EESC opinion SOC/288 Improving the Quality of Teacher Education)
- There is the urgent need to have a high level of infrastructure that will incentivise more women in particular

women who have just given birth, to enter and remain in the labour market. This includes accessible and affordable childcare facilities up to adolescent years, matching the working hours of both parents (also through after school services) Addressing maternity leave issues is highly important

- More family-friendly working time organisation in the public and private sectors
- It is also important to utilize with more equity the voluntary sector in particular for non formal learning programmes (2011 European Year Voluntary Activity)
- Addressing high rates of illiteracy and absenteeism with urgency
- Creating a more child/student centred education system with a holistic approach that will also provide the necessary skills building for team work, creativity and innovation, leadership, a quality lifestyle that will balance life and work (reform of primary education)
- Instilling a culture of research and innovation at all levels of education (European Year of Creativity and Innovation 2009)
- Fostering an entrepreneurial mindset at all levels of education: primary, secondary and tertiary
- Intergenerational Transfer of knowledge policies and practices in the public and private sectors
- Effective action in lifelong learning and adult learning

Sources: www.cedefop.europa.eu

**Grace Attard,
NCW President**

The National Council of Women welcomes the following new members:

New Members

Ms Liz Borg Cardona from Swieqi.
Ms Rita Falzon from Attard.
Ms Marcelle Muscat Fenech from Swieqi.
Ms Jennifer Miller from St Julian's

Life Members

Ms Elvira Abela
Ms Antoinette Baldacchino
Ms Juanita Bencini
Ms Wilma Vancell
Dr Marion Zammit Mangion

Affiliated Organisation

Action for Breast Care Foundation



DIARY OF EVENTS JULY 2009 TO SEPTEMBER 2009

July

- 1st Presentazzjoni formali ta' rapport 'Il- hidma lejn l-inkluzzjoni Socjali tfisser il-hidma kontra l-faqar' Grace Attard and Doris Bingley attended EESC meeting on Fuure Skills for Future Jobs. Grace Attard participated
- 2nd MEUSAC Environment Committee - Environment Sectoral meeting at Project HouseMarie Demicoli attended
Labour Market Observatory. Grace Attard participated
- 3rd Dokument qabel il-Budget 2010. Laqgħa ta' konsultazzjoni dwar is-settur tan-negozju held at le Meridien Doris Bingley attended
- 4th Meeting at American Embassy on Research on Gender Equality. NCW Grace Attard and NCPE Therese Spiteri attended
- 9th Ministry of Finance-Public consultation at St James Cavalier Doris Bingley attended
- 14th EDRC- Recent European Court of Justice cases on collective Employment Law Rights at the Carlson Suite Radisson Grace Attard and Doris Bingley attended
- 17th Public dialogue to discuss the priorities of the Swedish Presidency as well as Malta's priorities within the EU for the next 6 months at Hotel Phoenicia Grace Attard
Council for the Voluntary Sector Meeting
- 21st NCW President and General Secretary invited to a reception on the occasion of Belgian National Day hosted by The ambassador of Belgium & Mrs Jean-Francois Delahut
- 29th Action of Breast Cancer Foundation meeting with the President & General Secretary to discuss affiliation with NCW
- 30th Commonwealth Teleconference for CSAC (Civil Society Advisory Committee) in preparation for CHOGM

August

- 4th MEUSAC- A Civil Society meeting on the role of Civil Society and the EU funding opportunities held at the Exchange Buildings, Valletta. Grace Attard was panel member and Doris Bingley attended
- 7th PBS Radio programme on Gender issues. Grace Attard participated
- 10th Memento Workshop organized by Atelier Culture Organisation and held at NCW.
- 19th Teleconference for Commonwealth Coordinators of the Commonwealth Women's Network to finalise the Gender Assembly for the CPF.
- 24th New Sessions of Computer courses started at NCW Centre
- 26th MEUSAC Sectoral Committee Meeting on Social Policy - Grace Attard and Doris Bingley participated
- 29th The Council for the Voluntary Sector Seminar for NGOs, held at St Agatha School, Rabat. Grace Attard was rapporteur on workshop on Training. Marie Demicoli and Doris Bingley attended

September

- 2nd Fifth monitoring committee for the EEA Financial Mechanism and the Norwegian Financial Mechanism – Doris Bingley participated
EESC Meeting New Skills for new Jobs. Grace Attard participated
Press Conference by the organisation for the promotion of Human Rights to launch funding of the project. 'Violence in the EU Criminal' . Wilma Vancell attended
Presentation on Micro Wind Turbines by Mr. Patrick Mifsud from MEPA at NCW Centre organized by the Enviroment Committee
- 9th Seminar organised by the Swedish Embassy to Malta and MEUSAC Managing Climate Change, Global EU and the Maltese perspectives at the Phoenicia Ball room. Grace Attard participated
- 10th Executive Committee Meeting
- 15th Vanessa Mc Donald interviews Finance Minister Tonio Fenech on Re-budget 2010 at the International Hotel. NadyaAnne Mangion attended
EESCLabour Market Observatory
- 16th EESC 2nd meeting of evaluation of Roadmap for Equality
- 17th Central Committee Meeting
- 18th Seminar on the establishment of a network Socio Economic experts in the anti discrimination field at the Westin Dragunara Doris Bingley attended
- 21st Mass to celebrate Independence Day at St John Cathedral Valletta
Concert to celebrate Independence Day at The Palace, Valletta
EESC Group III meeting on Civil Society in Stockholm
- 24th Arrival of Delegates for the 4th UNESCO Women's Congress
Welcome Reception for H.E. MR DOUGLAS W KMIEC, Ambassador to the United States of America. Grace Attard attended
- 25th – 26th – 4th UNESCO Women's Congress opening on the Role of Gender Equality in the Small States of Europe at the Palace Hotel organized by NCW
- 26th Gala Dinner in Honor of the delegates at the Malta Hilton
- 27th Tour of Mdina for the delegates and NCW member
- 29th - 2nd Oct - Commonwealth Meetings in London including a two day Conference on Global response to HIV/AIDS crisis. Doris Bingley participated.
- 30th MEUSAC Environment Sectoral Committee meeting on the implementation of the EU directive on CO2 emissions - air transport- Marie Demicoli attended
Creating Innovative working arrangements through the support of Public Employment services for a better work-life reconciliation (Presentation of Malta Research findings) at Le Meridien Hotel Marie Demicoli attended

CURRENT AND FORTHCOMING EVENTS

Media Education and Children

The Education Committee will be organizing their monthly talk on Thursday 26th November 2009 at 7.15pm with the theme, "Media Education and Children" Rev. Father Joe Borg will deliver the talk.

Preservation of Material Cultural Heritage

The course 'Preservation of Material Cultural Heritage' at EQF Level 1 is a 40-hour course aimed to instill the desire of learning on how to handle antique objects/artefacts. It is intended to make one conscious of the fact that each object has specific sensitive needs. Throughout the course importance will be stressed on the need to practice regular house keeping since it is only through such a practice that one may keep a keen and observant eye on details.

This course is free of charge and will be starting on 30th November 2009. Courses will be delivered in both Maltese and English in Malta and Gozo. Further information may be obtained from Heritage Malta website or call 23954223.

COURSES BY THE EMIGRANTS' COMMISSION

The Emigrants' Commission organizes courses for:-

- Maltese who are marrying a non-Maltese.
- For couples who are civilly married and intend to convalidate their marriage in church,
- For single mothers who are marrying a non-Maltese.

These courses are held three times a year at the Emigrants' Commission, Castille Place Valletta.

These preparatory talks are given by experts; social workers, legal advisers, gynaecologists, and religious. Those who have completed the course are given a certificate of attendance, which is one of the documents that have to be presented at the Curia. Three months prior to their marriage, three pre-nuptial talks are given by the Director of the Emigrants' Commission, Fr. Alfred Vella and these are meant for the Couple.

For further information kindly phone: 21222644 or 21240255 during office hours, or e-mail cecmalta@onvol.net or johgiglio@yahoo.com.

Antoinette Giglio

Entertainment or Addiction? Where do youths cross the line?

Training Seminar
7th November, 2009
Dolmen Resort Hotel

Members & Students 25 Euro
Others 35 Euro

Registration includes:

- Welcome coffee
- Mid Morning coffee break serving tea, coffee, juices, water & freshly baked pastries
- Lunch in Menhir restaurant serving plated pasta, buffet main course, plated dessert & flowing water
- Resource pack that can be used when tackling addiction
- A certificate of attendance

For reservations or further information

contact us on psdmalta@gmail.com or 79255070

Organised by the PSD Teachers' Association

in collaboration with the Department of Psychology - University of Malta and SEDQA



NCW Christmas Celebrations at the Hilton Christmas Gala Dinner

Date: Thursday 17th December 2009,

Place: Hilton Malta Portomaso St. Julians

Time: 7.30pm for 8.00pm

Price: 35 Euro, Price includes: Welcome Drink at the Bottega Bar, Dinner at the Oceana Restaurant, water, wine, Coffee or Tea and free parking.

For further information and booking for all NCW activities, kindly contact NCW

Office on **21248881 / 21246982** or

email: **ncwmalta@camline.net.mt**

BMV MUSIC COMPETITION

The final round of the Bice Mizzi Vassallo Music Competition is being held at the on **Saturday 12th December 2009** at **Sala Isouard, Manoel theatre**, Valletta at **18.30hrs** and will be open to the public. Tickets will be available from the booking office of the Manoel Theatre.

Gozo Outing on Friday 6th November 2009

The Environment Committee is organizing a Gozo Outing on Friday 6th November 2009. Transport leaves Blata l-Bajda at 7.30am for various pick-up points. We shall visit San Lawrenz Local Council, Gozo Cottage and other places of interest. Return boat trip at 16.30hrs. Price €10 for transport. Due to limited places booking is on first come first served basis.

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