

NATIONAL COUNCIL OF WOMEN MALTA

Annual General Meeting - 31 January 2009

1. Resolution: Health and Safety at Work

NCW

aware

that health and safety at work should be seen as a key factor for economic growth and productivity. It involves not just businesses and workers but society as a whole. Costs resulting from insufficient safety at work and a bad working environment need to be better analysed

recommends

- ***Targets*** for cutting down accidents at work (EU goal 25%)
- A comparable target for *reducing occupational illnesses*, with special attention to work related cancers.

also aware

that new and rapidly changing forms of work organisation and new technologies bring new risks.

recommends

that health criteria-based exposure limits be adopted according to the Scientific Committee on Occupational Exposure Limits (SCOEL) health criteria-based exposure limits including

- providing an appropriate level of safety during *exposure of workers to the risks arising from physical agents*. (electromagnetic fields) used in various economic sectors including welding, electrolytic equipment, aerials, power installations and MRI equipment used in medical diagnosis should be treated as a matter of priority.

also recommends

- ***Inspection to cover all types of employment***, bearing in mind new forms of employment. Legislation should cover all workers irrespective of the type of work or form of employment
- ***Identifying priority target groups*** – workers with disabilities, women, older workers, young workers, migrant workers need specific regulation, policies and support.
- In the case of ***migrant workers***, acquisition of language skills which are an important factor in ensuring prevention and dissemination of information
- ***specific occupational risks for women*** including measures targeting potential mothers, pregnant women and women who are breastfeeding to be put in place and strengthened through collective agreements between stakeholders

- ***Updating health and safety training at the workplace.*** Key target groups such as superiors and staff responsible for health and safety and human resources managers to be provided with sufficient time to carry out their health and safety responsibilities. Companies have an obligation to carry out in-house monitoring and to ensure there are accessible channels for redress
 - ***that Social partners improve the mental health of workers through agreements on stress, violence, harassment and sexual harassment at the workplace*** by ensuring that policies are implemented and that all workers are adequately informed of their rights. Special attention should be given in times of situations that cause more intense stress such as in cases of restructuring, redundancy, internal mobility etc
 - Developing ***a culture of risk prevention***; training programmes must be stepped up
 - Risk prevention to be included in educational programmes - starting from pre-school education and including basic vocational training through PSD (Personal and Social Development) throughout a student's school-life cycle
 - ***Adequate funding*** to ensure that ***national labour inspections*** are effective and independent.
 - Besides monitoring compliance with safety rules, ***national labour inspectorates*** need to play a positive role by providing employers with *advice and consultancy*
 - Raising awareness of health and safety at work through education campaigns in schools at all levels and for the general public in collaboration with the Health Promotion Department and Media outlets
 - **Setting up a free phone number facility** for information and assistance to encourage responsibility towards colleagues at work and as active citizens
-

NATIONAL COUNCIL OF WOMEN MALTA

Annual General Meeting - 31 January 2009

2. Resolution:

Maltese women candidates for the European Parliamentary Elections

NCW

aware

of the forthcoming June 2009 elections for the European Parliament

aware of the EU Commission's Roadmap for Equality between Women and Men 2006-2010 stating as one of the six priority objectives 'Equal representation in decision-making'

aware

that the representation of women in political leadership is necessary to achieve equality.

aware

that opportunities for fully utilising the potential of both men and women in politics will be of benefit to the Maltese society

Calls on government

to ensure that measures are taken to increase the number of female candidates nominated for the European Parliamentary Elections in June 2009

Calls on all political parties

to take the necessary measures to ensure that through the selection and nomination process for European Parliamentary Elections June 2009, the list of prospective candidates of their respective parties includes at least 30% female candidates

Calls on Government, Local Councils and political parties

to create more awareness through education campaigns to raise the profile of women in decision-making in particular as candidates for the EP, taking also in consideration women's participation and successful involvement in Local Government

NATIONAL COUNCIL OF WOMEN MALTA

Annual General Meeting 2009

3. Resolution on the Reform of Primary Education in Malta

NCW

aware

of the strategic plan and the recommendations of the Policy Document *For All Children to Succeed (FACTS) (2005)*

of the need of a holistic approach to education – from 'teaching' to 'learning' through experiential learning within the classroom, family, town/village, the world at large context

of the European Year for Innovation and Creativity 2009

of the need for a new approach to primary education, in particular in Year 6, which is the year of transition from Primary to Secondary education

also notes that the changes require policies that would ensure the success of the necessary changes

recommends

- that the national curriculum be revised and adapted to the proposed changes

incorporating within the national curriculum through all subjects, including the academic subjects, skills building such as risk taking, initiative, team work, problem solving, conflict management, analysis, evaluation and investigation, which will provide for students reliance more on thinking skills and less on purely memory skills

- that in current ‘colleges’ and in the setting up of future ‘colleges’ priority is given to measures that stimulate ownership by all stakeholders, including heads of schools, teaching staff and representatives of the Education authorities
- more extensive transition programmes for children moving from primary to secondary levels to be better prepared for change both psychological and academic
- a policy to provide for an increase of professionals of identified academic subjects to facilitate differentiated learning in primary schools, together with the current system of class teacher responsible for the overall running of the class and teachers/ specialists in PSD, Drama, ICT, Sports, the provision of facilitators for children with mental or/and physical disabilities and facilitators of children with learning difficulties/social problems according to EU standards.
- that following the appointment of a EO for Media Education, immediate steps will be taken to incorporate appropriate media education at primary, secondary and tertiary level to address the need for skills of students, including active (rather than passive) participation with all forms of the media, in particular the information and communication technologies
- that teachers’ responsibility regarding the holistic development of children of all levels of achievement be given priority in initial and ongoing teacher training and that support systems will be strengthened to assist teachers at the risk of demotivation and emotional stress
- that facilitators (LSA) be child-centred and not subject-centred to ensure acquisition of social skills with the classmates, the teaching staff and all other school staff
- that in mixed ability classes, the number of children should reflect their needs by identifying and allocating the necessary physical space and facilities within and outside the classroom that would be necessary to ensure the successful implementation of the changes proposed
- an increase in the number of professionally trained teachers in primary schools to meet the demands of the proposed changes, encouraging prospective students/ teachers to train in areas reflecting the socio-economic needs of our country emanating from a supply and demand policy

- that initial teacher training should reflect teacher/educators or learning facilitators, ability to give structure to the knowledge acquired by young people from other sources, which are sometimes more up-to-date than the teachers' own.
- that the knowledge acquired from the Internet and the new information and communication technologies that are available to most young people today, and which they access and use without due consideration, be addressed either in teacher's initial training or in their ongoing training, so that they are able to assimilate this knowledge in order to incorporate it into young people's education
- that teacher training includes components that help teachers acquire the knowledge and techniques and support to deal with the phenomena of immigration, social discrimination, poverty, youth violence, especially in urban areas, and greater job instability and long-term unemployment
- that teachers' education and professional training are closely connected to other key policies on innovation, research, business, entrepreneurship and employability and to the recognition of professional qualifications and climate friendly energy use
- that following the findings of research that has been carried out regarding illiteracy a programme of training for a coordinated approach to the issue will be immediately put in place and implemented
- a similar approach to absenteeism built on current findings
- further measures to address the phenomenon of bullying, including more practical tools for all school staff
- partnerships between educational institutions including primary, secondary, tertiary education and University at all levels and employers/business to identify future skills needed for Malta and Europe
- training and career guidance and counselling at different levels
 - a. in initial teacher training
 - b. in professional career guidance and counselling training to meet today's and future needs at degree level and further
- encouraging, in particular study leave and cross-EU teacher mobility, e.g. via study leave, national representation of events as a vector for experiences and innovation to improve lifelong learning
- that the European Year for Creativity and Innovation 2009 will serve as a spring board to encourage policies and activities that are innovative in all education related sectors including teachers and students at all levels

- Monitoring of implementation of the proposed changes to identify shortcomings and ensuring they are addressed without delay
-

NATIONAL COUNCIL OF WOMEN MALTA

Annual General Meeting – 31 January 2009

4. Resolution: SMEs: A favourable business environment: supporting enterprise and job creation

'Think Small First': A Small Business Act for Europe

NCW

aware

That 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

also aware

that SMEs are a crucial part of our economy and a major source of employment, entrepreneurial skills and innovation

recommends

- 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 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

- further incentives for environment friendly and energy efficiency projects for SMEs, in particular in the construction sector
- ensuring that the specific needs of women entrepreneurs are addressed to increase their participation in economic activity
- 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

NATIONAL COUNCIL OF WOMEN MALTA

Annual General Meeting - 31 January 2009

5. Resolution on Children as Indirect Victims of Domestic Violence

NCW

aware

that domestic violence by men against women and women against men, whether physical or psychological, is one of the gravest violations of human rights: the right to life and to physical and psychological integrity. Although action at EU level in the past few years on the issue of domestic violence against women has been taken, it is still recognised as a problem in all the EU Member States.

also aware

that domestic violence affects not only the victims themselves, but also other family members, especially children. Children who become witnesses of domestic violence are

always victims of psychological violence too. However, awareness of children as indirect victims of domestic violence is still limited.

Calls on Government and the Office of the Commissioner for Children

- to take the necessary measures to ensure that children, indirectly affected by domestic violence be considered as victims in their own right and that specific support be developed and made available.

recommends

- that shelters for women provide better for children, through increased resources that cater for a holistic support that includes also family, social, educational and psychological needs of children
- that more police protection is provided, in particular when social workers and members of the family leave the shelter or are on their way from the shelters to the Law Courts.
- that greater consideration be given in family court proceedings to the risks associated with domestic violence than has been the case hitherto, in particular the high probability that the risk of violence will not end once the couple has separated and therefore follow-up services after separation need to be provided
- that Court Orders and supervised access visits be provided in cases where children are at risk, prior to and during Court proceedings
- that particular consideration be given in situations of the children of abused women migrants, who are especially vulnerable when they come from societies and cultures where gender inequality is greatest and gender-specific roles are most entrenched and cultural norms exist that support the rights of men over women

NATIONAL COUNCIL OF WOMEN MALTA

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 31 JANUARY 2009

6. Resolution: The Contribution of Information and Communication Technologies to Sustainable Development

Justification

- ICT makes a substantial contribution to sustainable development, since it helps in understanding and studying the issue and in the development and diffusion of sustainable technologies and on the other hand it is a powerful tool for enhancing the policy-making process through the use of ICT as a tool for making optimal decisions on vast information flows which are processed and analysed.
- Applying the new standards on energy consumption and bearing in mind the issue of power consumption savings, a significant difference can be made to the monthly energy bill covering the operational expenses of hardware and home appliances.

- Empowering consumers by information can result in indirect effect on sustainable consumption: Intelligent products that can inform users about optimal use and give feedback about the environmental impact of different choices.

NCW recommends

- Greater energy efficiency in enabling more efficient business and working practices
- More intelligent use of energy in buildings
- More intelligent mobility, with more intelligent vehicles and public transport services
- ICT equipment and services emerging as major additional users of energy
- Increasing the energy-saving potential and the CO2 emission-reduction of ICT-based services
- Optimising benefits of ICT-based innovations without a substantial rebound
- ICT-supported research and development on sustainable issues (e.g., modelling and simulation procedures and storage and evaluation of data on the environment).

also recommends

A new dedicated *programme to address the current negative effects of using ICT* entitled "My Computer – My Healthy & Wealthy Friend!", based on a strategy *including an advertising campaign to educate consumers on:*

- Permanently measuring / monitoring hardware power consumption
- Using fewer servers and printers by increasing the use of virtual servers
- Stop over-provisioning and improving capacity planning
- Improving cooling efficiency
- Turning power management on, turning to stand-by or turning equipment off after hours
- Extending the life of assets by re-use both within the enterprise and externally
- Ensuring and validating the correct distribution of all electronic equipment
- Analysing all waste

further recommends

A major new programme structured in line with the newest technical and technological R&D projects supported by ICT in order to face and solve current challenges in Buildings, with particular reference to:

- Adopting an EU set of integrated standards for "Intell@Buildings" by 2015 to cover interoperability of technologies

- Developing low-cost technologies (e.g. sensors), together with suitable power management technologies for operation in homes
- Developing expertise in software at EU level for optimisation and control of networks of multiple buildings
- Training specialists to provide high quality energy services
- Building regulations to improve the demands for increased energy efficiency
- Establishing a strong body in Malta for the new area of "Intell@Buildings" which drives standards, provides an effective forum and competence centre for members and lobbies national governments
- Supporting SME growth to produce new eligible energy service providers
- Developing new ICT applications dedicated to network monitoring and optimisation software.

further recommends

ICT-supported methods to control building services:

Time-based: providing heating or lighting services, etc. only when required.

- Heating: used to turn on and off the heating system (and/or water heating) at pre-selected periods (of the day, of the week etc.)
- Lighting: to switch on/off automatically in each zone to a preset schedule for light use.

Examples:

Heating control examples:

- Temperature control: heating system pumps and boilers when the external temperature reaches a set level (0°C).
- Compensated systems: controlling the flow temperature in the heating circuit relative to external temperature.
- Thermostatic radiator valves: sensing space temperature in a room and throttling the flow accordingly.
- Proportional control: switching equipment on and off automatically to regulate output.
- Other methods: Thermostats, movement detection sensors, passive infra-red (PIR) sensors, etc.

Lighting control examples:

- Zones: Lights are switched on corresponding to the use and layout of the lit areas;
- Passive infra-red (PIR): occupancy sensors indicating whether or not anybody is present and switching the light on or off accordingly.
- Light level monitoring: switching /dimming artificial lighting to maintain a light level measured by a photocell.

Home networking

- Routine installation of low voltage and optical fibre communication network cables for a wide range of "smart home" systems.
- Services and equipment that utilise these networks include: security; home theatre and e-entertainment; telephones, door-phones and intercoms; PC and internet networks; surveillance cameras; driveway vehicle sensors; communicating thermostats; motorised window blinds and curtains; entry systems; irrigation systems, etc.

ICT in work organisation

Developing implementation of the tele-work programme

NCW aware

that tele-work has already been introduced both in the Public and in the Private Sector. and that there is the need to develop a national strategy to reach optimum levels of performance and competitiveness and to safeguard the rights of employers and employees.

also aware

that the European social partners in the European social dialogue adopted on 16 July 2002 a European Framework Agreement on tele-work, identifying the areas for special attention in case of tele-working (that is, working at a distance from the employer's premises)

recommends

- that any change in work patterns or labour conditions be implemented in consultation with trade unions and representatives of the workers and employees..
- that the change to tele-work be voluntary both for the employer and the employee.
- that tele-workers benefit from the same legal protection as employees working at the employer's premises and should have the same collective rights.
- that special attention be given to specific employment conditions such as data protection, privacy, equipment, health and safety, work organisation and training.
- that tele-working is included in collective bargaining at national and company level, as well as in legislation.
- Further investment in ICT equipment and facilities for persons with special needs
- The introduction of ICT equipment and facilities particularly adapted for the elderly

NATIONAL COUNCIL OF WOMEN MALTA

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 31 JANUARY 2009

7. Resolution: The Portrayal of Women in Advertising

NCW

aware of the EC Treaty, in particular Articles 2, 3(2) and 152

aware of the Community acquis in the field of women's rights and gender equality,

aware of the Platform for Action adopted at the Fourth World Conference on Women held in Beijing on 15 September 1995 and its resolution of 18 May 2000 on the follow-up to the Beijing Platform for Action ,

aware of Council Directive 89/552/EEC of 3 October 1989 on the coordination of certain provisions laid down by law, regulation or administrative action in Member States concerning the provision of audiovisual media services (Audiovisual Media Services Directive)⁽¹⁾,

aware of the Council Directive 2004/113/EC of 13 December 2004 implementing the principle of equal treatment between men and women in the access to and supply of goods and services,

aware of the Commission's ***Roadmap for Equality between Women and Men 2006-2010*** (COM(2006)0092) and the related impact assessment (SEC(2006)0275),

aware of the EU Parliamentary resolution of 25 July 1997 on discrimination against women in advertising,

aware of the Resolution 1557 (2007) of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, entitled *Image of Women in Advertising*,

aware of the *European Pact for Gender Equality* adopted by the Brussels European Council of 23 and 24 March 2006,

aware of the relevant report of the Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality

Children and Advertising

also aware

- that socialisation through school, the family and the socio-cultural environment is a process that forges identity, values, beliefs and attitudes that give the individual a place and role in the society in which he/she grows up; whereas the concept of identification is key to understanding how this process works,

- that children are a particularly vulnerable group that places its trust not only in authority but also in characters from myths, TV programmes, picture-books, educational materials, TV games, advertisements for toys, etc.;
- that children learn by imitation and mimick what they have just experienced; and for that reason gender stereotyping in advertising influences individual development and accentuates the perception that a person's gender dictates what is possible and what is not,

notes

that efforts to combat gender stereotypes in the media and advertising should be accompanied by education strategies and measures to cultivate awareness from an early age and to develop critical faculties from adolescence onwards

stresses

the fundamental role which should be played by the education system in developing children's critical faculties with regard to images and the media in general, in order to prevent the unwelcome effects of the perpetuation of gender stereotypes in marketing and advertising;

Calls on Government and the Broadcasting Authority,

- to take the necessary measures, through the National Curriculum and through education channels to promote reasonable and responsible use of television and new technologies both at school and at home, from an early age onwards
- Draws attention in particular to the need to eliminate from textbooks, toys, video and computer games, the internet and the new information and communications technologies (ICTs), and from advertising through different types of media, messages which are contrary to human dignity and which convey gender stereotypes;

Advertising and Society

also aware

that advertising which conveys discriminatory and/or degrading messages based on gender and all forms of gender stereotyping are obstacles to a modern and egalitarian society,

that advertising and marketing reflect culture, and also contribute to its creation,

that advertising is a component part of the market economy and one of the aspects of reality with which everyone is confronted in daily life,

that advertising can sometimes present a caricatured view of women's and men's lives,

that gender stereotyping in advertising influences individual development and accentuates the perception that a person's gender dictates what is possible and what is not,

that advertising through different types of media is part of our daily lives, and is of particular importance that

that advertising can have a positive influence over society's perceptions of issues such as 'body image', 'gender roles' and 'normality' and that advertising can be an effective tool in challenging and tackling stereotypes,

notes

that marketing and advertising portrayals of the ideal body image can adversely affect the self-esteem of women and men, particularly teenagers and those susceptible to eating disorders such as anorexia nervosa and bulimia nervosa; calls on advertisers to consider carefully their use of extremely thin women to advertise products;

while recognising the work already done by media regulators to explore the effects of gender stereotyping and encourages regulators in all Member States to share best practice in this area;

Calls on Government, media outlets and relevant authorities responsible for media publications including print or audiovisual media

- to ensure by appropriate means that marketing and advertising guarantee respect for human dignity and the integrity of the person, are neither directly nor indirectly discriminatory nor contain any incitement to hatred based on sex, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation, and do not contain material which, judged in its context, sanctions, promotes or glamorises violence against women
- to encourage regulators to share best practice in this area;
- to monitor the implementation of existing provisions of Community
- to develop awareness-raising actions against sexist insults or degrading images of women and men in advertising and marketing
- to raise awareness of the need for an ongoing debate on marketing and advertising and their role in creating and perpetuating gender stereotypes;
- to ensure that advertising through media be subject to existing ethically and/or legally binding rules and codes of conduct
- to address the need to conduct continuous training for and in collaboration with media professionals, and awareness training for society on the negative effects of gender stereotypes
- to prevent adverts communicating discriminatory or degrading messages based on gender stereotypes as well as incitement to violence and
- to put in place the necessary rules or codes of ethic where these are missing and to provide sanctions for lack of compliance with the said rules

NATIONAL COUNCIL OF WOMEN MALTA

Annual General Meeting - 31 January 2009

8. Resolution: The Renewed Lisbon Strategy

The Lisbon Strategy is a project for European society as a whole enabling it to meet the challenges of a globalised world. Due to the current financial markets crisis and the subsequent economic consequences and increasing uncertainties, competitiveness, sustainable development and social cohesion remain of key importance. The three pillars of the Agenda - growth and jobs, social cohesion and sustainability - require a continuous interactive and balanced approach.

Strategic Renewal

NCW

aware

that the Strategy requires sufficient support from national governments and therefore they have a political and moral obligation to agree and envisage reforms with civil society organisations so that the non-governmental stakeholders can fully participate in setting the agenda of the Lisbon process.

aware

that the national Lisbon coordinators should more actively involve civil society organisations and social partners in the activities and reforms necessary to support the Lisbon Strategy (e.g. timely information, joint event planning, etc), and communicate the strategy to the wider public more effectively.

recommends

- closer cooperation between MCESD social partners and other civil society organisations that can contribute to positive policies and create new synergies.
- Participation by all the stakeholders including representatives of vulnerable groups (people with disabilities, immigrants, **older workers**, **people in retirement** etc.) should be ensured.
- more effective use of EU financing of the various Funds (Structural Funds etc) consistent with the Lisbon objectives
- new and innovative forms of governance to respond adequately to global challenges. Establishing *permanent dialogues* (including national ESCs, social partners, SMEs, universities, other civil society stakeholders including social

economy organisations and those working to promote social cohesion and equal opportunities for all.

- identifying bottlenecks in the implementation process and to promote new incentives for the areas which are lagging behind. In this way the MCESD can contribute in formulating proposals in order to respond to the problems which have been raised

Labour Market Policy

Although standard jobs continue to be the predominant form of employment throughout the EU, many of the new jobs created in recent years - particularly for women – have been part-time. There continues to be a manifest shortage of suitable jobs for older workers. And for young people in particular there has been a sharp increase in atypical (non-standard) forms of employment, in some cases without proper legal and social safeguards.

NCW recommends

- increasing employment security and preventing "insecure employment traps", *inter alia* by ensuring that the unemployed are not obliged to take on jobs offering no security, by combating undeclared work and by preventing the exploitation of workers employed on short-term contracts
- improving data collection and facilitating monitoring and evaluation

also recommends

- that National Reform Programmes include more concrete evidence of defined objectives, timescales, cost and budget provision in this way becoming more ambitious with noticeable qualitative improvement with regard to timing, responsibility, commitment of resources and financing, including specific objectives for the earmarking of appropriate budgetary resources for active labour-market policy in the individual Member States;
- stronger emphasis on the inclusion of people with special needs, with specific targets and greater recognition of social policy requirements; in this context, much more effort must be made to ensure that the positive developments in the economic and employment fields also reinforce social inclusion within the Lisbon strategy; to promote active social inclusion (e.g. fighting poverty and the exclusion of people and groups that are most marginalised)

Gender Equality

also recommends

- Common priorities in the coordination of employment policies to increase the female participation rate; inter alia, there should be concrete policy proposals aimed at encouraging single parents to develop marketable skills and to facilitate their access to employment;
- that the social partners be consulted on the aspects concerning the incorporation of gender criteria;
- that national governments, national equality bodies and the social partners ensure that the pay systems they put in place do not lead to pay discrimination between women and men,

both at national and company levels, by means of specific indicators; consequently, targets should be introduced to reduce the gender gap as regards access to vocational and technological training, and reduce wage differences at the time of recruitment

- measures are taken to eliminate existing labour-market discrimination and the structural causes of gender-specific income disparities, especially the promotion of social safeguards for women, via measures to reduce short-term, insecure part-time work and to improve the regulation of part-time work (e.g. extension of the right to part-time work for parents, with the right to return to full-time work later; improved involvement in in-house further training programmes);
- that national curricula include entrepreneurship education at second and third levels, especially among females, and that measures should be taken to increase the number of female graduates in scientific/technical disciplines in order to address the employment gender gaps that exist in technical areas like engineering and ICT-related services;

also recommends

- that more attention be given to gender equality and the need to balance work and family life; in this context, it is necessary to reduce the gender-specific segmentation of the labour market, especially through effective measures for reconciling career and family (in particular development of widely available, high-quality and affordable childcare facilities and various forms of support for those in need of care and their families, including 24-hour facilities);

further recommends

- the promotion of shared parenting (especially incentives for increasing the father's contribution to parenting) and to eliminate family-policy measures that encourage parents to leave the labour market permanently or for long periods of time;

- that parental leave allowances should not adversely affect income, but should not create new obstacles to the sharing of childcare by both partners.

NATIONAL COUNCIL OF WOMEN MALTA

Annual General Meeting - 31st January 2009

9. Resolution on Protecting Children using the Internet

NCW

aware

that the internet and communication technologies (referred to as "online technologies") were envisaged and designed as communications tools for academics and researchers; however, they are now used in homes, schools, businesses and public administrations

aware

aware children are active users of online technologies, and increasingly so. But, beyond the benefits of interactivity and participation in the online environment, they also face some serious risks:

- a) direct harm, as victims of sexual abuse documented through photographs, films or audio files and distributed online (child abuse material).
- b) a perpetuation of victims' sexual abuse by the repeated viewing of the records of their abuse due to widespread online distribution and global availability.
- c) direct contact by predators who will befriend them in order to commit sexual abuse ("grooming").
- d) victims of bullying in the online environment ("cyber-bullying").

also aware

that recent data suggests that online child sexual abuse content regularly hops host company and host country in order to avoid detection and removal, thereby complicating law enforcement investigation at a solely national level.

And lack of international efforts by domain name registries to de-register domains advocating the sexual abuse of children or providing access to such content

aware

of the valid work of the Commissioner for Children in dealing with the protection of children using the internet, the recent services of Agenzija Appogg and the Ministry for Information and Communication Technology (MICT)

also aware

of the service of a helpline that was initiated by Appogg, but due to non-renewal of the Project by the European Commission which means that there are no funds, the service is now being operated by a few individuals who dedicate a few hours on a voluntary basis.

aware

that the Malta Communications Authority is now responsible for the Protection of Children using the Internet

recommends

- Studies for a clarification of the scale of the problem as regards publicly available websites depicting the sexual abuse of children, (*currently studies identified a concrete "manageable" target of around 3 000 websites per year hosted around the world facilitating access to many hundreds of thousands of child sexual abuse images.*)
- the reduction of public exposure to child sexual abuse material by voluntary industry blocking of individual URLs by service providers.
- national recommendations to further develop online tools, such as filtering products, search engine security preferences and the like.
- collection of data regarding the regional hosting of child sexual abuse networks , in particular identification of sources by country
- Better networking with education institutions, services, government internet providers and the Office of the Commissioner for Children

also recommends

- that the legislative harmonisation across EU Member States is implemented at National level to include the following as minimum as set out in the Council of Europe Cybercrime Convention
- Further education and information for parents about what measures they can take to protect their children from child sexual abuse material
- Clear definition of what constitutes child sexual abuse material.
- That the age of a child for the purposes of the victims of child sexual abuse material is up to 18.
- That the possession and viewing/downloading of online child sexual abuse is an offence and warrants severe custodial penalties.

also recommends that

- That Malta participates in the EU Commission new programme ***Safer Internet for Children*** which will have the following four actions encouraging international cooperation as an integral part of each of them

- reducing illegal content and tackling harmful conducts online,
- promoting a safer online environment,
- ensuring public awareness,
- establishing a knowledge base.

further recommends

The involvement of the Commissioner for Children with young people and the dissemination of information to social networks utilised by those most vulnerable. (Youth have their own language and are often reluctant to listen to authority but welcome advice from their peers within their social environment. The "Rights of the Child" must be taken into account and therefore young people must be involved in the process)

NATIONAL COUNCIL OF WOMEN MALTA

Annual General Meeting – 31 January 2009

10. Resolutions on Irregular Immigrants

1. Permanent residence to refugees

NCW

aware

that those enjoying refugee status, who had been living in rented house on their own for five full years and who have always worked regularly i.e. with work permit, and paid due NI contributions and income tax

recommends

- that the above mentioned individuals be given the same treatment conceded to third country nationals and hence given permission to apply for permanent residence in Malta in accordance with EU legislation
- This will give the opportunity to those who had been deprived of their families for years be re-united together and if they so wish, work and take up residence in any other country within the European Union

2. Family re-unification

NCW

aware

That one of the gravest problems encountered by the Emigrants Commission is the problem of family re-unification: that of males or females separated from their families, at times for years

concerned

that in Malta there are about 200 cases facing the problem, where the head of the family had to flee from home by himself leaving his wife and children behind him in their home country,

or wherein the parents, having to cross the desert in their run from home, leave their small children with their relatives behind, or wherein the husband and wife in their run from home got separated at some point and finished in different destinations.

aware

that this separation is felt most when the husband had to leave home when his wife was pregnant, expecting a child, or when the wife on arrival in a country gives birth to a child in the absence of her husband – cases wherein the father has not seen his own child and wherein the child does not know his father – perhaps for years. Cases wherein the father still feels responsible for his wife and children and feels bound to keep on working to provide them with living.

aware

of the difficulties for the Government to admit another 600 persons in Malta, provide them with accommodation and maintain them.

aware

that according to Commission records more than half of these cases have a relative in countries of immigration.

recommends

- that government will seek agreements to address the problem of family re-unification with these countries of resettlement wherein all the family could be re-united in line with EU legislation

also recommends

- that this matter be taken up by Government with organizations like UNHCR which may guide us as to how to find solutions to this problem.

3. Rights to marry for individuals whose application for refugee status has been ‘rejected’

NCW

aware

of the difficulties that individuals whose application for refugee status has been ‘rejected’ including no legal identity and no opportunities for repatriation

aware

that EU legislation to address the status of individuals whose application has been rejected has been under discussion at EU Council level, EU Commission level and EESC level

recommends

that measures be taken so that persons with 'rejected' status be give the same rights to marry as in cases of persons enjoying temporary humanitarian status

also recommends

that all national and EU parties involved in migration and asylum policies work towards burden sharing legislation which will ensure the responsibility of all countries in line with the principle of solidarity, as an increasing number of countries are facing similar problems of disproportionate numbers of irregular immigrants similar to Malta

4. Issuing of birth certificates for newborn children of individuals whose application has been rejected

aware

that in cases where parents have been 'rejected' refugee status, the birth of a child is being refused a birth certificate registration

aware that

such a child has no legal identity and therefore has no legal rights and is subject to all forms of abuse

NCW recommends

that these situations be given the importance they deserve by the relevant authorities

also recommends

that the implications of such decisions be carefully studied and that the relevant steps be taken to find solutions so that a birth certificate is issued

NATIONAL COUNCIL OF WOMEN MALTA

Annual General Meeting - 31 January 2009

11. Resolution: Legal framework for temporary workers

NCW

aware

that a new Directive ¹ has been recently adopted at an EU level with the specific objective of regulating the employment conditions of temporary workers,

aware

that the primary aim of this Directive is to ensure the protection of temporary agency workers and to improve the quality of temporary agency work by ensuring that the principle of equal treatment is applied to temporary agency workers,

aware

of the need to establish a suitable legal framework for the use of temporary agency work with a view to contributing effectively to the creation of jobs and to the development of flexible forms of working,

aware

that temping work is another means of further increasing female participation in the labour market,

aware

that a legal framework to regulate temping Agency workers is of benefit to both employers and employees as all stand to gain from legal certainty.

recommends

That the Government ensures that Malta takes the necessary steps to put in place the relevant legal framework in order to be in a position to fully transpose as expediently as possible this recent Directive for the benefit of both employers and employees by the deadline stipulated in the mentioned directive, that is, 5 December 2011.

Grace Attard

NCW President

¹ Directive 2008/104/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 19 November 2008 on temporary agency work
