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TITLE: "EUROPEAN NETWORK OF FEMALE ENTREPRENEURSHIP AMBASSADORS"

Entrepreneurship through Education Conference 20 January 2012 Dolmen Hotel Qawra, Malta

The Ministry of Education, Employment and the Family in collaboration with the Ministry of Finance, the Economy and Investment organised a conference 'Entrepreneurship through Education – Delivering Effectively' on 20 January 2012 at The Dolmen Hotel Qawra. Maryrose Francica FWE, Nadyanne Mangion NCW, Sandra Zammit and Miriam Duca AMIE Ambassadors attended.

The aim of the conference was to determine how to develop and deliver effective entrepreneurship and entrepreneurship skills through education. Dr Jason Azzopardi Minister for Fair Competition, Small Business and Consumers explained that entrepreneurship is a seed, skill and outlook and as such needs to be nurtured, taught and instilled in our young generation. We also have to teach youth to take risks and not be afraid to do so by giving them the tools to work both on their successes as well as their failures. He stated that under the first scheme 19 projects were carried out with a funding of €71,000; each project benefiting from a maximum of €5,000. The State has put aside a further €100,000 for the coming year; with the aim that these funds be used in entrepreneurship training in educational institutions. The SME sector in Malta is a resilient one proved by the fact that it has and is surviving the economical crises affecting Malta. We need to learn from the entities involved as they have a large potential and they are the main reason that Malta has fared relatively well during these hard times.

Ms Antoinette Caruana from the Malta Chamber of Commerce stated that the Entrepreneurship through Education scheme is in line with the Lisbon Strategy's aims for economic growth and is a key tool for flagship initiatives in economy in the Europe 2020 Strategy Education and Training principles for achieving these objectives. Ms Caruana added that entrepreneurship skills were not only useful for students should they eventually set up their own business but also for all students in whatever line of work they might choose to follow. Ms Caruana acknowledged the work Maryrose Francica and AMIE were doing amongst students in schools to raise awareness on entrepreneurship. She stressed the importance of encouraging young women to set up their own businesses in Malta. Young women can contribute to the economy even by working from home and thus be able to balance work/life more effectively. Ms Caruana also impressed the need for closer collaboration which was not sporadic but long-term between schools and industry.

The Ambassadors in Malta for Increasing women Entrepreneurs – AMIE Project 2010 -2012 was featured a number of times in the video clip 'Entrepreneurship through Education Scheme 2011' shown in the schools where the ambassadors had participated.

AMIE Project was also mentioned by Ms Caroline Jenner CEO Junior Achievement – Young Enterprise; specifically stating that women entrepreneurs being amongst the most successful in the economic scene. During her presentation Ms Jenner gave results of a survey carried out amongst 25 000 students in all EU states. 76% of the students identified entrepreneurship as 'cool'. This mindset indicates that Europe is ripe for the teaching of entrepreneurship skills in schools. Ms Jenner claimed that the people who bought into entrepreneurship are 'in'. The success of the first Entrepreneurship through Education Scheme carried out last year showed that Malta was moving in. Education is a highly competitive and economically and politically important sector. Parents and teachers are the people who influence young people most. They are the pipeline conducive to a better economy eventually. This is where efforts must be concentrated. Skills are required to help young people adapt to change. This is what entrepreneurship training is all about.

Mr Marko Curavic head of Unit for Entrepreneurship, EU Commission also mentioned AMIE to point out that the project is part of a European network which could provide teachers with a useful tool to take into the

classroom. He pointed out that exposing student to the experiences of real life entrepreneurs could create new role models and would be another step towards engendering the entrepreneurship attitude in students.

Mr Malcolm Hoare, Regional Director, Centre for Education and Industry at the University of Warwick UK; identified quality management tools for effectiveness in entrepreneurship education. If an education system does not include entrepreneurship education it does not belong to the 21st century. Enterprise helps to rebuild a community. The results of a survey carried out on enterprise education indicated that enterprise is about lifestyle, teamwork, networking and personal development. Successful entrepreneurs have a grasp of entrepreneurial knowledge, skills, attributes and attitudes. Effective enterprise education involves learning through, for and about enterprise; as well as effective entrepreneurial teaching and learning. Creativity and innovation are the most useful skills and these are already found across the educational curriculum. He ended by saying that enterprise education is about challenging the status quo and that chaos theory rules as we never know if it will work out in the way we intended initially. However we would always have affected the outcome of the future.

All participants then took part in one of four workshops dealing with teacher training and continuous professional development; entrepreneurship education as a cross-curricular theme; promoting a culture of entrepreneurship in schools and colleges and creating school-parents-business-community partnerships.

Mr Ray Camilleri Director for Curriculum Management and e-Learning Department in the Directorate for Quality Standards in Education wrapped up by informing all present that entrepreneurship skills were included in the new curriculum framework under discussion; thus giving a clear signal of its importance. These skills enable students to grow and obtain the right employability skills and make them better future learners. They would thus be able to take the responsibility of their own learning and eventually any decision they might make in the future.

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