



**European Economic and Social Committee
Member Delegation Report Ms Madi Sharma
SOC SECTION**

Event. Stakeholder's Conference organised by the Foundation for Women Entrepreneurs

Place : Qarwa, Malta

Date 15th June 2012

Subject: Presentation by Ms Madi Sharma on female Entrepreneurship and barriers for women owned businesses.

I was honoured to speak at the conference and present not only the barriers to female entrepreneurship using my own experiences but also highlight the EESC opinion (SOC 446) which was looking to address some of the issues with policy recommendations.

The Island of Malta is one of my favourites as there is a great sense of optimism, probably from all the sunshine! Malta has the best of both worlds, the European Union to the North and Euromed to the South and it makes full advantage of both in its activities, and these benefits were something we could share with the women to promote new markets and networks.

I also took advantage of being on the Island a day early by meeting with a former member Ms Sylvia Gauci, Secretary General of Malta Council for Economic and Social Development who took me to see a tourism project in Gozo, being aware that tourism is big part of the COSME agenda of the Commission. The project has linked rural development of the farmers and traditional lifestyle with modern tourism. We also met with the developers of the new resort and another project the new aquarium, the first in Malta.

The Conference was part of the project **FE:MALE** (Female Entrepreneurs: Mentoring and Lifelong learning across Europe) funded by the European Commission under the Leonardo Da Vinci which focusses on a target group of female adult learners with a double-disadvantage. The objective is to increase the confidence, self-efficacy and entrepreneurial inclination. The coordinators of the project were from the United Kingdom with partners the Foundation for Women Entrepreneurs – Malta, VHTO – The Netherlands,

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Viteco – Italy and Intercollege – Cyprus so there was a wide range of experiences and case studies to be shared , and networks to be developed.

The Projects' objectives are mainly to transfer proven successful innovative learning methodologies from the UK to partner countries; To develop a European training the trainers package to transfer the Mentoring Circles for Female Entrepreneurs methodology to partner countries; To transfer and adapt paper based materials to e-learning materials to widen access to online development tools for female entrepreneurs on a European scale; To build and develop crucial social capital for women entrepreneurs online (social networking-learn zone); and To enhance the provision of vocational guidance across Europe by providing quality personal development tools/training methods aimed at reducing personal self-limiting beliefs of women.

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