



Newsletter of the National Council of Women - Malta

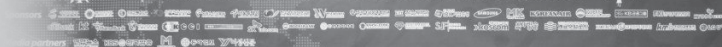


European SME Summit 2012
The Maltese Delegation



Council

The Hon. Minister Dr Chris Said with NCW President Mary Gaerty



Mrs Doris Micallef presents her latest book to Dr M. Schembri Wismayer on behalf of NCW Malta.



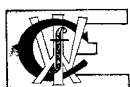
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Members of



International Council
of Women
Founded 1888

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



European Centre of the
International Council of
Women
Founded 1961

In Special Consultative
Status with the Economic &
Social Council of the UN.

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il-Mara

NEWSLETTER OF THE NATIONAL COUNCIL OF WOMEN - MALTA

Kunsill Nazzjonali tan-Nisa
Pope Pius XII Flats, Mountbatten Street
Blata l-Bajda HMR 1579, MALTA
Tel: 21 248 881/21 Tel/Fax: 21 246 982 E-mail: ncwmalta@camline.net.mt
<http://www.ncwmalta.com>

Congratulations to former NCW President Dr. Lorraine Schembri Orland



The National Council of Women welcomes the appointment of Lorraine Schembri Orland as a judge. Dr. Schembri Orland served as president of the National Council of Women and was awarded Honorary Life membership in 2010. Dr. Schembri Orland was born in 1959 in Sliema, graduated as a lawyer in 1981 and specialised in European law and family law. She was involved in reforms to the Constitution and was a member of a consultative committee that advised the Cabinet on amendments to the Civil Code. Dr. Schembri Orland was also heavily involved in drawing up legislation on domestic violence and was the first woman elected to the committee of the Chamber of Advocates. NCW wishes Judge Schembri Orland great success in this very important role.



Congratulations to Dr. Natasha Galea Sciberras

NCW welcomes the appointment of Dr. Galea Sciberras as magistrate. Dr. Galea Sciberras was born in 1976 and graduated as a lawyer in 2003. She has worked in the family and civil law sectors. She was also the legal consultant of Agenzija Appogg and Transport Malta and chaired the Adoptions Board. NCW wishes her continued success.

Dear Readers,

October has been one roller-coaster of a month and the women at NCW have been busy as ever.

The United Nations has declared October 11th as International Day of the Girl and NCW Malta has warmly welcomed the decision to dedicate the day to promote girls' rights, highlight gender inequalities and address discrimination and abuse suffered by girls around the globe.

Amid the hot debate on the national IVF legislation, NCW has reiterated the need for the legislation of alternative IVF treatment not least because of the sensitivity and the consequences for parents and our society in general if it had to remain unregulated.

Moreover, the end of month also saw one of the most debatable equality issues this year – the EU 40% gender quota for women in boardrooms. The quota on bluechip company boards has been postponed, but Commissioner Viviane Reding is determined not to give up and promises that the issue will be back on the Commission agenda by the end of November.

More news is to be found along the pages of this issue of il-Mara. Feel free to send us feedback on ncwmalta@camline.net.mt. Here is to a peaceful autumn

Maria Stivala

President's Message



Dear Members,

As happens every four years, the Olympic games were once more an event awaited and followed by many, not to mention the extreme hard work involved by the nation hosting the games and by the participating athletes. These young and not so young men and women, all have their

stories of hard work and long hours of training to tell, of how with great sacrifice and dedication this has led them to participate in these prestigious games, as an athlete or a coach. It was also the first time that every participating nation had a female athlete in its team, women that for them to participate in sports was a milestone not only in their career but a milestone for other girls in their nation. Hopefully these women will serve as role models to the young girls interested in attaining such success at this level. Attaining success is a long road of dedicated hours, days and nights and this without any doubt is the recipe for success in all ventures, be it work, sports or family.

The summer gave no respite to events at NCW with visits by the Honourable Chris Said, Minister of Justice, Social Dialogue and Family, where he held a press conference on the IVF Bill now in its 2nd reading in Parliament. The IVF issue has started several debates especially in the gay community since donors of either sex are prohibited, according to the bill. The discussion with regards to oocyte(egg) freezing as an alternative to embryo freezing was accepted by the Council who had also recommended this solution, in order to eliminate the possibility of discarding embryos. With the Prime Minister, The Honourable Dr Laurence Gonzi and



MEP Dr Simon Busuttil, we discussed women in the labour market, the forthcoming elections and women candidates and how to increase the number of women in decision making positions. The last visit in this trilogy of visits, was by HE Gina Abercombie Winstanley, the



new American ambassador. She took an immense interest in the work that NCW is doing and discussions about women's participation in all sectors, especially in decision making positions and politics, entrepreneurship and labour market, as well as domestic violence were discussed. In fact as a follow up and in anticipation of the elections, we were invited to a video conference at the embassy regarding women in politics. She wished the council greater successes in its endeavours and promised her assistance whenever she could.

A few weeks ago the news of a baby found drowned in a bath shocked the nation. Many said, how is it possible that children look after children, that a nine month old baby is in complete care of a seventeen year old single parent. The constant increase of underage girls becoming pregnant is preoccupying, the reasons why this is happening are several and one cannot point a finger at a single cause. I was recently discussing this issue and the social benefits acquired by these young women came up as a major concern to many. The government needs to seriously tackle the issue of discriminating between an unmarried single woman with a child and a married woman with a child, favouring the single parent as a recipient of social benefits for many years. This is increasing the number of women in precarious work as they otherwise risk losing these benefits. The message being sent must be addressed and women educated as to the risk of being left without a pension later on in life.

My involvement in NCW especially now, has opened my eyes to a number of social issues, one of them being domestic violence. In a span of a week, there were three reports of women being seriously attacked. What the onset of these attacks were, will eventually come out in court, but violence is never a solution to settle an argument and never a resort to provocation. Again educating our youth will assist these young people choose the right partner, detect any signs of violence at the early stage of their courtship and how learn how to address conflicts and arguments between them.

Mary Gaerty
President



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The National Council of Women supports the Legislation of alternative IVF treatment

NCW has always advocated for legislation of alternative IVF treatment not least because of the sensitivity and the consequences for both parents and society if it had to remain unregulated. NCW believes that IVF treatment should be for heterosexuals within a stable family environment. The Council has always supported the protection of embryos as the first cell of a human life and, with the development of alternative treatment over the past years this has become possible successfully.

Recent studies are providing evidence that further developments in this matter will have even better results. It is a fact that fertility declines with age. Women's fertility peaks when the women are in their early twenties. Statistics today, however, show that many women are postponing their pregnancies until much later due to a number of reasons. This is contributing to many women having problems in conceiving and looking for help later on in life.

The preservation of the female egg, instead of the embryo, considered to be the first cell of a human being –

eliminates legal and ethical problems of ownership. The female gamete (oocyte) belongs to the female, as opposed to the embryo, which belongs to both partners. The ethical, religious and moral issues involved during the process of embryo freezing which no court is comfortable with when deciding on the matter of frozen embryo ownership, are eliminated when oocyte vitrification is opted for. Complex problems due to the negative aspects of embryo freezing of a legal nature result when split couples enter into acrimonious battles over ownership of the embryo.

While acknowledging that the Bill provides for the regulation of IVF treatment, it all provides easier access to women with fertility problems to undergo this treatment, free of charge, in a healthy and safe environment. NCW also recommends that professional assistance, in particular psychological assistance, before, during and after the process is finished as at all stages, both parents, especially the mother will be going through a difficult time due to the sensitivity of the matter which is still new to our Maltese society.

NCW also agrees to the right of both mother and father to have access to information concerning this treatment as

well as the consequences. Furthermore this information must be delivered in such terms so as to be fully understood by both partners involved.

Good results depend on excellent standards, including the training of embryologists and doctors, and the use of top-quality materials, to select the best oocytes instead of embryos. Any sort of experimental approach should be avoided and local embryologists and doctors must be well trained in the procedures involved. General Practitioners need to be regularly updated on fertility issues including prevention but also regarding pathologies that cause damage to the human reproductive system.

While noting that for the first time the definition of embryo and inception of life has finally been stated clearly in the Bill, NCW urges legislators to include better clarification of terms such as 'force majeure' in a medical context, and the interpretation of 'a stable relationship' as envisaged by the Bill. It also raises concern on the need for a clear interpretation of 'any other reason' in cases where adoption of embryos is found to be necessary, which will be regulated by the Embryo Protection Authority.

Lejla Letterarja evening in Valletta

Members and friends enjoyed a lovely evening at Cafe Deux Baronnes Valletta listening to poetry and prose while enjoying the lovely summer breeze with the view of the magnificent Grand Harbour. Georgina Aquilina shared her recollections of the bygone days of the family life in the early sixties. Imelda Serracino Inglott through her ways of mixing poetry and prose gave us an enjoyable piece of the solidarity between young and old. The marvelous diction of Marlu Coppini savoured the poetry of Nicolas Depiro, Anna Maria Weldon and Alessandro Liberto. The contributions of Doris Camilleri, Laura Clark, Anthony Stivala and George Cassola were also thoroughly enjoyed by all. The council would like to thank Mr. George Cassola who patiently prepares the programme in a very artistic way to bring out the full enjoyment of the event.

During the evening Mrs Doris Micallef who is a life member of the National Council of Women and in many ways have supported the council throughout the years presented to the Honorary Life President Dr. Mercedes Schembri Wismayer, a publication of her works entitled, "Paintings of Malta and Gozo".

Those wishing to buy this publication please contact the NCW office.



Marie Demicoli - Rapporteur Environment Committee

New members:

NCW welcomes the following new members:

Amanda Cassar from Luqa and Nadia Josephine Hili from Marsaxlokk

The Malta Institute of Management (MIM) Conference on Domestic Violence

On 24 September 2012, MIM and the European Economic and Social Committee organised a Conference on Gender Violence and Domestic violence, with particular reference to the CoE Convention on Eradicating Gender based violence and Domestic Violence. Maltese Anna Maria Darmanin, Vice President of the EESC chaired the Conference. EESC members, Madi Shama representing employers, Mario Soares representing Trade Unions and rapporteur of the recently approved opinion on

Domestic Violence and Grace Attard representing Civil Society were key speakers.

The conference included a number of panels dealing with the various aspects of addressing domestic violence. Grace Attard made a powerpoint presentation on the different instruments currently in place within the EU Institutions (as well as further instruments to be introduced) and the need for harmonisation with National legislation on gender violence to be able to ratify the COE Convention

The discriminatory interventions of Dr Josie Muscat shocked the participants. Grace Attard, addressed Dr Muscat privately and challenged his assumptions inviting him to reflect more carefully on his views. Madi Sharma with my support, sent a press release to The Times which was immediately published on Twitter and on the newspaper the day after.

Grace Attard,
NC Vice-President, EESC

Consultation Meeting with the Hon. Chris Said Minister for Justice, Dialogue and the Family

During the meeting the President Mary Gaerty and members of the Executive committee expressed their support for the in vitro fertilisation (IVF) Bill and agreed that it should be available for heterosexuals within a stable family environment

The question with regards the criteria for what makes a "stable family" was put forward and the minister said that the law does not touch the definition of a stable relationship but prohibits egg and sperm donation for all couples. Couples wishing to undergo an IVF procedure have to be accepted by the authorities.

The couples must be of legal age, married and/or in a "stable relationship". Those interested must also go through counselling, preparing the mother psychologically to "know

what she is going in for". Dr Said remarked that the "subject is in itself sensitive, touching humanity, and therefore must be dealt with sensitively" seeing as it is still a draft which needs consultation.

The Council fully supports the Bill which not only takes into consideration the needs of mothers who have fertility difficulties, but it also offers protection from abuse, detailed information for couples on the whole process and the need for psychological support throughout the whole process, before, during and after the treatment.



CSW57 "Elimination and Prevention of all Forms of Violence Against Women & Girls"

The priority theme for the 57th session of the Commission on the Status of Women will be **Elimination and prevention of all forms of violence against women and girls**. The Commission will be held from March 4-15 of 2013. The annual Commission on the Status of Women is an essential event for NGOs and activists from all around the world to have a voice.

Violence against women is not only a specific and serious human rights violation but also a direct result of social and political gender inequality. Protection from violence against women is enshrined in various human rights treaties, in international charters that address women's issues, and is one of the UN

Secretary-General's initiatives during his term.

NCW Malta has been the leading organization in raising awareness to end Violence Against Women. Organizations must explore the deep socioeconomic structures that perpetuate gender-based violence in order to identify the areas of emphasis to be addressed. The Council always stressed that the pursuit to end violence against women must be accomplished at a global and national scale, involving multiple stakeholders, be based in education, and must be exhaustive and maintained. All forms of violence against women negatively impact whole communities. Access to "support services" such as justice, women's shelters, and health services, should

be adequately provided to all women who face violence; unfortunately, these services do not always reach certain vulnerable groups, including elderly women, disabled women, children and young women.

The preparation of this annual major event for women movements has already started with NGOs, organization or individuals submitting "communications" to CSW to highlight cases of non-respect of women's rights.

CSW aims at highlighting violations of human rights that 'affect the status of women in any country in the world'.

Doris Bingley
Hon General Secretary

Instruments for EU member states to effectively address Gender based Violence

Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence. It is the first comprehensive legal instrument in Europe covering also international affairs

General Information:

The Parliamentary Network 'Women Free from Violence' is composed of 49 parliamentarians has been active since 2006. Since 2011, it has set as its main objective the Promotion of the Istanbul Convention (CETS No. 210). Mr Mendes Bota (Portugal, EPP/CD), General Rapporteur on Violence Against Women.

The Convention will enter into force once 10 countries have ratified it. 8 out of 10 ratifications have to come from Council of Europe member States

Definition:

For the purpose of this Convention:

a. "violence against women" is understood as a violation of human rights and a form of discrimination against women and shall mean all acts of gender-based violence that result in, or are likely to result in, physical, sexual, psychological or economic harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life;

b. "domestic violence" shall mean all acts of physical, sexual, psychological or economic violence that occur within the family or domestic unit or between former or current spouses or partners, whether or not the perpetrator shares or has shared the same residence with the victim;

Victims

The implementation of the provisions of this Convention by the Parties, in particular measures to protect the rights of victims, shall be secured without discrimination on any ground such as sex, gender, race, colour, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, association with a national minority, property, birth, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, state of health, disability, marital status, migrant or refugee status, or other status.

European Parliament contribution to gender-based violence

- Motion for a European Parliament Resolution on Combating Violence against Women and

Domestic Violence (CAHVIO), to prepare a future Council of Europe Convention on this subject. **Rapporteur: Eva-Britt Svensson State-ment**

- Violence against women is an international as well as a European problem. Despite the fact that violence against women has been a topic of debate over several decades, the international community has not managed to put an end to this extremely destructive form of criminality. The European Union must therefore shoulder its responsibility and introduce the legislation required to put an end to the violence

Highlights of the EU Parliamentary Resolution

1. Demands on the Member States to provide law enforcement staff with clear instructions on how to proceed in cases of gender-based violence and to provide **the necessary training on the prevention and detection of gender-based violence**, equality between men and women and the needs and rights of victims,
 - requirements for Member States to demonstrate due diligence and to record and investigate all forms of gender-based violence crimes in order to initiate public prosecution,
 - plans to develop specific investigative routines for police and health sector professionals in order to secure evidence of gender-based violence,
 - **policy proposals to help victims rebuild their lives, in addition to ensuring their safety and re-establishing their physical and psychological health**
 - minimum standards to ensure that victims have professional support in the form of advice from a legal practitioner irrespective of their role in the criminal proceedings,
 - plans to develop methodological guidelines and undertake new data collection efforts to obtain statistical data on gender-based violence;
2. Deplores the fact that several Member States still do not regard gender-based violence as a public offence and still require a victim complaint or private prosecution, which constitutes a failure of these states to exercise due diligence;
3. **Calls on the European Commission, using all available expertise, to develop and provide annual statistics on gender-based**

violence, including figures on how many women are killed annually by their partner or ex-partner, based on data from the Member States;

4. **Asks the Commission to consider establishing an observatory on violence against women within the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE), in close cooperation with the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA)**
5. **Notes that the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) will, in the form of a survey, interview a representative sample of women from all Member States regarding their experiences of violence, and asks that the focus be placed on examining the actual responses women receive from the various authorities and support services when reporting**
6. **Urges Member States, in their national statistics, to make visible the magnitude of gender based violence and to take steps to ensure that data are collected on gender-based violence, including the sex of the victims, sex of the perpetrators, their relationship, age, crime scene, and injuries**
7. **Proposes a new comprehensive policy approach against gender-based violence including a criminal-law instrument in the form of a directive against gender-based violence.** The European Union, with the Lisbon Treaty, has a broader competence in the area of judicial cooperation in criminal matters, including on criminal procedural law and substantive criminal law, as well as in the area of police cooperation. Currently an **ongoing study is being carried out to assess the added value of ratifying the Convention**

Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality – FEMM/7/10627 Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence. Exchange of views With Council of Europe and Presidency in Office - Meeting Wednesday 19 September 2012

Issues raised:

The Convention provides a comprehensive set of legal measures for more equality – more power balance

However there is still the overall imbalance of power and the subordination of women which are some of the reasons for resistance to the Convention

- The importance of an integrated approach at national and regional level
- Legal and financial implications: the financial crisis is not to be used as an excuse for putting in place the necessary concrete measures
- Protection of victims including mandatory legal assistance and other support measures
- Funding for adequate shelters, in particular run by the private sector
- The impact of pornography that is not a criminal offence but that depicts the image of women as inferior human beings
- The feminisation of poverty: the importance of a strong welfare system that empowers women and provides for their economic independence
- Resistance regarding the different sectors of women as covered by the Convention
- EU non-competence regarding a number of Articles which have to be considered before the EU signs up as Party to the Convention, on behalf or otherwise of its members.
- Individual member states can sign and ratify irrelevant of the European Union's position migrant women without a regular residence status
- Collection of data and national reporting: the lack of comparable data collection and research

The European Commission:

The Commission has taken some important decisions in principle towards this end, particularly drawing up the **new Action Plan for Gender Equality (2010-2015)**, which stresses that gender-based violence is one of the key problems to be addressed in order to achieve genuine gender equality.

In 2011, The Commission submitted a strategic plan to combat gender-based violence, including **a proposal for a European Year of Combating Gender-based violence**.

Currently studying areas of EU competence, shared competence and non-competence in relation to the Council of Europe Convention with the aim of submitting a proposal to the Council which will require qualified majority after consultation with the European Parliament

Drafting another **proposal on minimum standards on the rights and support measures for victims of crime, (adopted during the first week of October)**

European Economic and Social Committee, EESC. Initiatives for a holistic approach to gender equality:

- A wide range of Opinions related to Gender Equality, in the social, cultural, educational, economic and political spheres and also in other areas such as research and the green economy
- The Roadmap for Equality 2006-2010 and the follow-up Strategy
- Domestic Violence, 2006
- SOC 465 Eradicating Domestic Violence (2012) approved by the EESC September 2012 Plenary Assembly
- Current EESC Opinion on The role of Women in the EU 2020 Strategy (SOC 471)
- Conference on Gender Violence and the Council of Europe Convention on the Prevention and Elimination of Violence Against Women Friday 21 September 2012

Opinion by Committee on Equal opportunities for Women and Men – Parliamentary Assembly – Council of Europe- Mr Mendes Bota (Portugal, EPP/CD), General Rapporteur on Violence Against Women

Key Issues:

- the inadequate protection of some specific vulnerable groups, such as children, elderly people and migrant women without a legal residence status.
- In the field of prosecution, too much flexibility is left to the states parties on how to sanction some of the forms of violence covered by the draft convention, whether through administrative, civil or criminal law.
- The need for a much stronger emphasis on the obligation to criminalise certain acts of violence, even if this created the need for some member states to make **additional efforts to adapt their domestic law to the draft convention**.
- **The exceedingly broad latitude to make reservations is left to the states parties, with the result that a considerable proportion of the convention could be made inoperative.**

This is all the more worrying considering that reservations could be made to important provisions such as those concerning the victims' right to compensation, the exercise of jurisdiction, the statute of limitations, residence status and the obligation to provide for criminal sanctions for certain acts, as opposed to non-criminal sanctions..

- Moreover, in order to make it explicit that the convention applies also to migrant women **without a regular residence status** and to reinforce measures aimed at protecting them and encouraging them to report violence to the relevant authorities proposes strengthening the text

The representation of Women in the

Media and on Internet:

The image and visibility of women and men given by the media, in general but especially TV and Internet continue to strengthen and perpetrate gender stereotypes and stereotypical attitudes that shape the public perception. There is the need for more women key decision-making positions in media companies, including the print media to reflect a realistic picture of men and women and the notion of quality media to promote democratic values

Source Directive 2010/13/EU (Audiovisual Media Services Directive)

Continuing support to the DAPHNE programme:

Consolidation of the existing Daphne programme by ensuring its continuation after 2013 and providing additional sustainable and substantial resources. The Daphne programme should ensure that appropriate funding is dedicated to actions aiming at eradicating all forms of violence against women and girls, including perpetrator programmes.

Tackling gender violence in prison:

There is a need for penitentiary institutions to develop action plans to work on focusing on in-prison programmes for female survivors and male perpetrators of gender violence, at the same time targeting prison staff from all EU member states to become more aware of this issue. In Europe women constitute on average 5% of the total penitentiary population, of which nearly 90% have suffered gender violence throughout their lives

Source SURT DAPHNE programme : www.surt.org

Men and Boys in eradicating gender-based violence:

Prevention work and campaigns targets at men and boys should address those men and boys who commit violence against women and girls with the aim to stop them perpetrating violence, and men and boys in general to make them stand up against violence against women

When addressing men and boys, the strategy should aim at tackling gender stereotypes, and in particular stereotypes on masculinity. It should aim to lift taboos and encourage men and boys to discuss the impacts of violence.

<http://ec.europa.eu/progress> www.coe.int/conventionviolence conventionviolence@coe.int

www.assembly.coe.int/stopviolence women-freefromviolence@coe.int

**Grace Attard,
NCW Vice-president, EESC member**

The International Council of Women General Assembly in South Korea NCW Malta in South Korea for ICW Triennial



The Korean National Council of Women, under the leadership of President, Jung Sook Kim organised an inspiring and varied programme over a week in two major hotels in the centre of Seoul.

The 33rd International Council of Women General Assembly got underway at the Lotte Hotel with an opening ceremony on September 17 evening, called "Progress for Women, Progress for All."

Doris Bingley represented NCW Malta and organised the European Regional Centre Meeting as president of ECICW

About 1,000 guests who were mostly female leaders of member countries attended the opening ceremony. Cosima Schenk, the president of ICW and Jung-Sook Kim, the president of KNCW, welcomed the guests with the opening remark and welcome note. Michelle Bachelet, the head of UN Women, sent a video message auguring the participants stimulating meetings. The key note speakers present were Gertrude Mongella, a former president of Pan-African Parliament, Yoon-ok Kim, the first Lady of South Korea, Keun-hye Park, a former chairperson of the ruling New Frontier Party and Keum-lae Kim, the Minister of Gender Equality and the Family. They had one message to all those present: to encourage women to participate in all spheres of public life in order to tackle global issues. They appreciated the efforts that women leaders have made by shedding light on contemporary issues which are plaguing women and finding solutions to various challenges as well as leaving a positive mark on society.

Afterwards Artists from the National Gugak centre

took to the stage to present Korean traditional art performances, sharing the Korean spirit.

During the day of 17th September the ICW Regional Councils held their General Assemblies. ECICW had a full day programme which included the approval of the minutes of the Spring GA in Athens and financial report presented by Martine Marandel, President of NCW France, while the Presidents or Representatives of the Councils presented their reports. President Doris Bingley launched the website and facebook which needed the approval of those present. The members had full praise for the work done by the young Maltese woman in designing the website and once all the material is in place the website will go public. Two presentations by President Doris Bingley on "Women Empowerment & Rio + 20" and "Investing in Women for a Democratic World" were greatly appreciated and there was particular interest in acquiring them to show to their members. Observers at ECICW meeting included Morocco and South Africa.

The 33rd International Council of Women General Assembly was a big event in the history of ICW with participants and observers from about 80 countries. Numerous partial participants and observers were representatives of NGOs who had been invited by NCW Korea and sponsored by governmental training programs, by Koica and various institutes. They took part in the opening ceremony and the seminar and besides these they participated in special training sessions during the week. The whole program in connection to the General Assembly was effectively organized, magnificent and a great success. Our warmest congratulations to the Korean National Council of Women!

The official business programmes of the 33rd ICW-CIF General

Assembly started on September 18 at President Hotel, Seoul. During the morning session, members reviewed and approved the minutes of the 32nd ICW-CIF General Assembly held in Johannesburg, South Africa. In addition, elections for a new president who will lead the organization for the next three years and a treasurer were held. Cosima Schenk from Switzerland was re-elected President while Angelika Hecht from Germany was elected Treasurer. In the afternoon, representatives from member countries shared their practices for enhancing women's right and empowering women for the past three years. After the official programme, participants moved to the Institute of Traditional Korean Food to experience Korean cooking. Wearing Hanbok (Korean traditional clothes), they had a chance to view the food museum and cook and taste Korean food such as Bulgogi and Bibimbab. This was great fun and brought many smiles and laughter throughout the evening as various different nationalities tried to muster the Korean cooking techniques.

On Wednesday 19 September the International Women's Forum was held at the Crystal Ballroom of the Lotte Hotel. ICW members and Koreans NGOs participated for the International Forum. They exchanged a wide range of good practices, knowledge and experience with high-level and accomplished speakers. Dr. Kyung-wha Kang, Deputy High-Commissioner of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (UN-OHCHR) shed light on the framework of the United Nations Millennium Development Goals in terms of the gender equality and women's rights. Lorena Aguilar Revelo, Global Senior Gender Adviser of the International Union for the Conservation of Nature asserted that actions to promote gender equality and women's empowerment are central to a country's



effective response to climate change, in order for it to meet the challenges and achieve the Millennium Development Goals. A panel discussion with 5 different topics entitled 'Transformative Politics by Women', 'Gender and Technology', 'Sustainable Social Welfare for Women', 'Human Rights of Women', and 'Toward Effective Development Cooperation: the Role of Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment' were actively discussed with experts and professionals leading the way. Then the Chairperson of the Maekyung Media Group, Dr. Daewhan Chang gave a speech on the Global Economics and Women. After the luncheon, there were workshops with the aforementioned topics. This was followed by a Friendship Night. During the Friendship Night, Mr. Won-soon Park, the Mayor of Seoul and Sang-hee Kim, Chairperson of the Gender Equality and Family Committee delivered encouraging speeches to the women leaders participating in the Seoul General Assembly. ICW delegates were touched by the splendid performances of the Men's Popera quartet INCIELO, Soprano Su-yeon Kim, Tenor Yoon-seok Han, and the Lee Young hoe Chorus. The music and singing were superb

On Thursday 20, September, Christine Knock of New Zealand organised an Interfaith Service with Christians, Anglicans, Orthodox, Islam, Hindu, Buddhist, Bahai and other faiths praying together. Sheila Petersen of Great Britain spoke on the International Day of Peace and later at the business meeting a Declaration on the sufferings of women and children in wars, calling to renew efforts to achieve peace, was sent to Michelle Bachelet Head of UN Women.

At the morning meeting at the Hotel President, elections for Vice Presidents, Board Members, and Recording Secretary of the International Council of Women were held. After the business session, women representatives from each country toured Seoul taking the group photo at the front of the Sejong Center, then visiting Changdeokgung, Gwanghwamun Square, and Bukak Skyway, and enjoying Seoul attractions with colleagues and friends.

The Business Meeting of the 33rd General Assembly of the International Council of Women continued at the Schubert Hall of the Hotel President on Friday, 21 September, 2012. The results of the elections for the Board Members

as well as Recording Secretary were announced during the meeting. Doris Bingley NCW Malta was elected on ICW Board. Doreen Micallef, NCW Malta was elected Recording Secretary. Afterwards participants evaluated the triennial theme 2009-2012 and actively discussed the new triennial theme for 2012-2015. Elisabeth Newman then announced the voting for the Coordinators of Standing Committees and Advisors which took place on Friday afternoon.

That evening the Gala Dinner took place, the international contingent networked and built up a number of contacts. They enjoyed every moment of that evening especially the beautiful music and singing by Tenor Shin-joo Kang, Soprano Soo-kyung Ahn, and the string quartet.

The Saturday 22nd September meeting was held at the Schubert Hall of the Hotel President. In the morning session, new life members, individual members, and new members of the committee of honour were introduced amid the applause of the delegates. The results of the Standing Committees Co-ordinators and experts were announced. Nadyanne Mangion,



NCW Malta was elected co-ordinator for General Well Being. Furthermore, ICW-CIF Standing Committees Plans of Action and Objectives for the next three years were presented and adopted at the meeting.

Lastly, with all the outcomes discussed from the various forums, workshops and conference, the delegates presented a 'Seoul Declaration for the advancement of women'. The Seoul Declaration will be used and promoted by not only women leaders but also many organizations for the Gender Equality and empowerment of women around the world.

At the Closing Ceremony, delegates and attendees expressed sincere appreciations towards the Korean

National Council of Women for the efficient preparations and organisation of all the events and programmes of the General Assembly in Seoul, Korea.

At the Closing Ceremony, ICW international delegates visited the global IT company, Samsung Electronics Corporation with the vision of 'Inspire the World, Create the Future'.

After the end of the 33rd General Assembly of the International Council of Women, on Sunday 23 September, 2012, the Korean National Council of Women organised a special Demilitarized Zone Tour. ICW delegates and other women representatives arrived at the Demilitarized Zone passing by the Unification Bridge which is known as the Gateway to the Unification, constructed by the founder of Hyundai Corporation to enter North Korea as a payback in 1998, and used by the former presidents to cross the border for North-South summit talks.

Delegates visited DMZ Museum and watched the video depicting post war Korea and viewed the exhibition of the ecological environment of Demilitarized Zone which has been preserved for about 60 years. Besides, there was time to listen to the history of the DMZ and the truce line between North and South Korea as well as the unresolved issues of the separated families. All the participants understood the importance of the unification. ICW members also visited the 3rd Infiltration Tunnel which was discovered on October 17, 1978 and the Dora Observatory where visitors can view a part of North Korean life through a telescope together with the Imjingak Pyeonghwa Nuri Park. I found going down into the deep tunnel and looking at the other side which is relatively very near, was a touching and moving experience

On Monday 24th September the new ICW Board met to discuss the next three years programme and Plan of Action which will have the theme **"Caring for Women is Caring for the World"**

Doris Bingley
Hon General Secretary
ECICW President

EESC NEWS



Tresmed 4 Final Seminar Women and Social Dialogue Thessaloniki

Grace Attard was once again invited to represent the EESC to participate in the TRESMED 4 seminar which is the last of the series before the commencement of TRESMED 5. The seminar brought

together representatives of government, Employers, Trade Unions and NGOs working in the field of gender equality. Participating countries included Spain (coordinator of TRESMED project), Greece, Italy, Egypt, Israel, Palestinian Authority and the EESC. The themes under discussion were the situation of women in the labour market; equal

opportunities and participation in civil society organisations; representation of women in ESCs, Education, vocational and technical training and childcare programs. Grace Attard was chair of a number of sessions and made concrete proposals regarding funding opportunities and working better with the EESC

EU Parliamentary Committee Women's Rights and Gender Equality Debate on Gender-based Violence and the CEO (Istanbul) Convention

On behalf of the EESC, Grace Attard was invited to participate in the EU Parliamentary debate on the Council of Europe Convention on Eradicating gender violence and domestic violence on Wednesday 20 September 2012. Grace Attard made a presentation on the initiatives of the EESC to address

gender violence and domestic violence. She also highlighted the importance of ensuring that gender balance is reflected in all area under discussion, as this impacts also on gender violence which often is not addressed. A number of issues were raised focusing in particular on the Council of Europe Convention on Eradicating gender

violence and domestic violence which was approved at the end of 2011. Grace Attard raised a number of issues on areas that are problematic for EU member States to be able to ratify the Convention without reservations. The meeting also had an exchange of views on Women on Boards. The session was live web streamed

EESC commemorates International Day of Peace highlighting Gender Violence

Grace Attard participated in EESC Conference celebrating International Day of Peace, on the theme gender-based Violence in Rue Belliard, Brussels on Thursday 21 September 2012. The Conference was addressed by key

experts from the EU Parliament, the EU Commission, European Agency on Gender Equality, (EAGE) European Women's Lobby, (EWL) European Agency for Human Rights (FRA) and NGOs from different countries worldwide. Grace Attard made

contacts with the EAGE and FRA which can be very useful for NCW. EIGE and FRA are working together on collecting data and setting up a Gender Equality Observatory among other initiatives

Grace Attard, NC Vice-President, EESC

Envoy Project 4th Conference held in Antonovo-Bulgaria Volunteering as a Social Resource

Our fourth encounter with the Envoy Participants was held in Antonovo, Bulgaria from the 10th to the 14th September 2012.

On Tuesday, the first day of our conference, we were driven to Antonovo where we were warmly greeted by the Mayor of Antonovo Mr Ali Taner and the Bulgarian Delegation, together with residents and journalists of Antonovo.

A very interesting visit to the river water purification plant followed. Here we were shown how river and lake water was filtered and purified and eventually used in the public water system. Next, we were taken to visit the National Children's Complex Jastrebinovo. In this complex, the conference was officially opened by the Mayor of Antonovo Mr Ali Taner who gave a very interesting presentation, followed by the presentation of the Slovenian Delegation on the Civil protection and Fire Brigade Volunteers. The Vice Mayor of Rocca Fiorita (a Town which is twinned with Antonovo) gave his presentation, followed by the Maltese Delegation's presentation, given by Evelyn Vella Brincat, which covered the importance of voluntary work, the

volunteers themselves and the reason as to why volunteering is considered to be one of the country's resources. The lead partner representative, Dr Angela D'Arrigo closed the conference with her presentation. Late in the evening we were invited to a an old building turned into a museum which belongs to the Local Council. We sat on a large terrace on top of a hilltop, overlooking the old walled city of Veliko Tarnovo and were treated to a spectacular synchronized music and light presentation of hundreds of years of history.

A visit to the town of Gabrovo was a must and here we visited the architectural ethnographic complex 'Etar' - a crafts' village where the original and local crafts are preserved, taught and encouraged. We also visited the Museum House of Humour and Satire in the town centre.

Lovech was another locality we visited and where we were given a full explanation of all the voluntary work being done there. There were various initiatives done through EU funding. These included houses for elderly disabled persons, houses for young mentally disabled persons, and the small but effective centre where people



who had a disability of some kind, were encouraged to produce some craft (jewellery, paintings, knitting and handicrafts in general) and these were given to visitors against a donation which would help to continue the supply of products needed for this project.

A visit to the Exhibition of Artistic Crafts and Arts was followed by a visit to the Troyan Monastery after which we dined and concluded this conference, with the exchange of gifts from the delegations and wonderful words of praise for the organizers, namely the Mayor of Antonovo Mr Ali Taner, the two deputy mayors and the local Council of Antonovo.

Evelyn Vella Brincat
Head of the Maltese Delegation

ICW Seoul Declaration

SEOUL DECLARATION

1. We, the women participating in the 33rd ICW-CIF General Assembly, gathered here in Seoul on 17-22 September 2012 on the occasion of ICW-CIF 124th anniversary, with the theme of "Progress for Women is Progress for All," concerned about the outcomes of upcoming +20 conferences, urge the Member States of the United Nations to make an evaluation of the implementation of the commitments to the Beijing Platform for Action (BPfA).
2. What has been achieved? What are the challenges they still have to realize by 2015? Included in the evaluation and monitoring should be their commitments to the ICPD Agenda, the Millennium Development Goals, Human Rights Agenda, CEDAW, Security Council Resolution 1325.
3. We urge Women's Organizations (International), NGOs, to make the commitment to monitor the above issues by making shadow reports.
4. In particular, we urge the monitoring of commitments regarding:
 - BPfA: the IO "Critical areas of concern" of the BPfA: leadership of women, participation and decision making



- MDGs: especially No. 3, Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women as the Cross-cutting goal
 - ICPD: Sexual Reproductive Rights, harmful practices/FGM
 - Human Rights: "Women's Rights are Human Rights"
 - CEDAW including the Optional Protocols and other Conventions
 - SCR 1325: involvement of women in peace prevention, peace negotiations and post-conflict situations and in National Action Plans.
5. We note the following emerging issues to respond from a gender perspective:
 - Climate change and Disaster Risk Reduction
 - Food Security
 - Water Sanitation

- Economic and Financial Crisis Effects

We are determined to:

6. Make concerted efforts to increase women's representation in decision making so that no more than 60% of both genders are represented at all levels of society, including the National and Local Assemblies, Government Cabinets, as well as private corporations.
7. Ensure that sexual crimes such as rape, sexual violence, sexual harassment and stalking are considered as violation of women's human rights to dignity that should be subject to heavy penalty, and urge governments to make it compulsory for Internet Service Providers to block pornography at source.
8. Pay special attention to rural, migrant, and elderly women, and urge governments and international organizations to take positive measures to protect the rights of refugee women so that they won't be forcefully returned to the country they escaped from.
9. Denounce sexual slavery and rape of women and children during and after wars and armed conflicts has to be condemned as a crime.

ECICW Statement

From the European Centre of the International Council of Women (ECICW-CECIF).

ECICW-CECIF, at its meeting in Seoul, Republic of Korea on the 17th September 2012, considered current problems affecting women and issued the following statement:

Women's rights: A non discussable issue:

ECICW-CECIF agreed that in recent years to date, many countries have undergone revolutions aimed to achieve democracy but some of these countries seem to have neglected women's rights.

ECICW-CECIF is affirming that no

real democracy can be achieved unless a total respect of women's rights is guaranteed.

ECICW-CECIF urges governments and European institutions to mobilize and defend this basic human right.

Doris Bingley,
President of ECICW-CECIF

Peace Declaration

On this International Day of Peace, the International Council of Women, meeting in their 33rd General Assembly in Seoul, Republic

of Korea, very conscious of the pain and hardship of our sisters and their families in areas of severe conflict, and supportive of efforts made so far by the

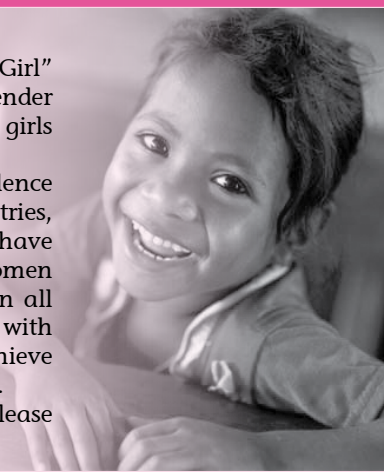
United Nations, calls on the Member States to make more positive, immediate moves towards peace in our world by the implementation of SCR 1325.

International Day of the Girl

The United Nations has declared October 11th as "International Day of the Girl" NCW Malta welcomes this decision as this day will promote girls rights, highlight gender inequalities and address the various forms of discrimination and abuse suffered by girls around the globe.

The UN has signalled its commitment to end gender stereotypes, discrimination, violence and economic disparities that disproportionately affect girls. In many developing countries, girls marry before the age fifteen resulting in having to drop out of school before they have a chance to receive the education they deserve. In the last half century alone, more women and girls have died as a result of gender discrimination than all the men who died in all the battles of the 20th century. NCW Malta believes that women's empowerment begins with girls' empowerment. It has always worked to help girls effect the changes necessary to achieve the same rights, the same freedoms and the same opportunities to fulfill their dreams.

Girls around the world need to be visible and given the dignity they deserve, to release all their abilities and potential for the benefit of society. .



National Council of Women Proposals and Comments for Budget 2013 and Forthcoming Elections

NCW has been carrying out various studies in preparation for the Council's contribution to Budget 2013 and forthcoming elections. The studies carried out include an analysis of the local situation in various fields and the sharing of good practice at EU level with different stakeholders including representatives of employers, Trade Unions and a wide range of NGOs.

This has been possible through the initiatives of European Economic and Social Committee (EESC), where the Malta representative of Civil Society, Grace Attard is working on different areas, with special focus on: employment, gender equality and social policy in their contexts of the current financial crisis. This document is by no means exhaustive and NCW will go on monitoring the local situation and making other relevant proposals

Recommendations:

- Reaching agreement on the design and implementation by government and relevant stakeholders on strong **Active Labour Market Policies** is an **effective key policy instrument** to address economic growth and the pension system's structural issues
- Trends in the **economic dependency ratio** are far more important than **demographic ratios** for economic growth and in determining future funding requirements for pension provision. This requires **strong measures for the creation of high quality jobs, with social security contributions which can address better the demographic challenges**

Active Labour Market Policies include among others:

Making working longer attractive – a mix of policies and preventing unemployment and exclusion from the labour market, particularly of older people, from arising during recessions (through appropriate anti-cyclical demand management); increasing and improve opportunities to enter the labour market

and job prospects for young people and those with poorer labour market prospects;

Managing population ageing to make full use of available employment potential through a targeted growth policy and by increasing the number of **high-quality jobs with compulsory social security contributions and training in age management both by the public and private sector**

Female Entrepreneurship:

During the last 19 months NCW led an EU funded project entitled AMIE. During the several meetings, seminars and conferences held, a number of issues that female entrepreneurs encounter and that require addressing are- the age at which a female starts a business, which generally coincides with the same times as planning for a family, finances, family life balance, childcare, mentoring, assistance and fiscal incentives together with a One Stop Shop for female Entrepreneurs, as well as an Act similar to the Women Business Ownership Act. (WBO or H.R. 5050) NCW recommends that entrepreneurship is introduced to young students so as to acquaint themselves with this concept.

More female participation in the labour market:

Although the government has introduced several fiscal incentives and training opportunities to encourage women to enter the labour market, the take up, although substantial when compared to recent years, still leaves Malta with a female participation rate lower than the EU average..

Recommendations:

- The need to increase in the provision of accessible and affordable childcare facilities through Public-Private partnerships in other areas, in particular where access is difficult
- The need for the launch of a national scheme for after-school services through public-private partnerships as another alternative, not necessarily depending on the use of school premises
- Mandatory registration of all childcare

centres and facilities to ensure standards are in place and to reduce parents' lack of trust in these facilities. Currently 53 centres are registered and 15 are in the process or are not

- Legislation and implementation measures for the provision of childminding
- A comprehensive review of flexibility and flexicurity measures in particular in the private sector to ensure that measures aim at adapting organisation of time to an individual's life cycle: youth, raising a family and old age
- Legislation covering non-transferable parental leave
- Evaluation of current and past financial incentives and family-friendly measures

Addressing the gender gap in Science and Technology. Recommendations:

- Changing the Practice of Research Grant Evaluations
- Promoting Women Researchers through individual coaching, mentoring training in particular before application, preparation for interview
- addressing barriers to access to PhD levels for women
- Comprehensive assessment – combining quantity and quality in assessing excellence - evaluation by cross-disciplinary panels
- Ensuring equality plans are in place
- Creating linkages between university and Business to understand better in which areas they can collaborate to promote female researchers

Addressing undeclared work Recommendations:

Informal work deprives workers of their social protection and society as a whole of taxes and social security contributions. It tarnishes the image and perception of domestic work, making it a second-class job, which encourages stereotypes and drags the entire profession down. It also increases the likelihood of poverty

- Introduce legal solutions, including provisions in the areas of tax, social insurance, labour law and civil law, increasing the motivation of households to employ registered domestic workers, and



potential domestic workers to take on work based on a legal contract.

- Draw up advice and recommendations for private individuals who are employers and the domestic workers they employ and make them commonly available. Promote information/training on the obligations and rights of employers and workers, especially where schemes exist to provide subsidies or tax deductions for employers.

Domestic Violence.

Recommendations:

- Inter ministerial Action Plan for the early detection and prevention of domestic violence
- Creating a bigger pool of professionals working in the field of domestic violence
- Adequate funding and free specialisation of post graduate studies for professionals working in the field of domestic violence:
- Social workers, psychologists to have specialised training in working specifically and separately with men, women or children either as victims or witnesses of domestic violence
- Setting up the necessary mechanisms to follow-up cases of separation of couples who are at risk of domestic violence. A study of the risks of continued domestic violence after separation needs to be carried out
- Adequate programmes for the police force as key elements in reducing and eliminating domestic violence
- Prevention and awareness raising programmes of domestic violence through campaigns for youth

Reducing the rate of early school leavers. Recommendations:

Ensuring current strategies to address the high rate of school leavers are reflected in realistic and effective targets (reducing number of early school leavers) and deadlines NRP 2012 targets are still too high; **reducing the rates of early school leavers up to 29% by 2020 is still very high.** With the recent measures in the Education Department, MCAST, ETC and ITS, the percentages of early school leavers should be much less.. There is the need to review the most recent figures

Towards a stronger workforce for Health. Recommendations:

- Addressing the challenges of demography
- Public Health Capacity
- **Training**
- **Data to support decision-making**
- **The impact of new technology: improving the efficiency of the health workforce**
- **Ensuring that healthcare services to be more accessible;**
- service quality and more cost-intensive treatments;
- the outbreak and potential of epidemic diseases, and
- local availability of healthcare

- **preventive and curative healthcare as both have an economic component**
- **making jobs in the health care sector more attractive to young people**

Addressing the needs of migrant women:

- To carry out studies on the potential of women migrants to the economy
- To monitor migrant women in undeclared work
- To offer training in employability skills

Women in political decision-making:

In Malta women are still under represented in political decision making assemblies. With the forthcoming Local Council elections and later General Election, NCW Malta urges political parties to rethink their strategies and adopt action plans for recruiting an equal number of women & men as candidates for 'winnable seats' and in general, for making party politics more inclusive.

Recommendations:

- NCW welcomes the steps taken by political parties to improve the participation of women in decision-making with an increase, albeit small, of a number of women in their decision-making structures.
- The principle of capitalising on the potential of all individuals (over 50% women) in decision-making should be the foundation for any decisions to be taken in the immediate future
- The next steps to be taken political parties is to introduce more concrete measures to ensure a mass of at least 30% participation of women, as required to be realistically effective in the decision making process of our political system
- Due to the short time available for elections, Government and political parties should immediately reach agreement within their decision-making internal structures and make public the measures they are to take to comply with the above recommendations for elections 2012-2013
- Political Parties and Government need to study and explain clearly what gender quota measures are, as misconceptions in society give the impression that meritocracy is not a priority
- Explicit rules about the implementation of gender quotas such as rank-ordering rules, legal sanctions for non-compliance (legislated quotas) and a 'contract' with the local party organisations (voluntary party quotas) are needed in the short to medium term
- Finally the incoming new government should ensure prioritizing the issue of women in decision-making both legally and through innovative measures by placing this issue on the agenda for a serious debate in the House of Representatives resulting in a National

Action Plan to include decision-making in all areas: political, economic and legal spheres at different levels

Pensions Reform

Recommendations:

Reaching agreement on the design and implementation by government and relevant stakeholders on strong **Active Labour Market Policies** is an **effective key policy instrument** to address the pension system's structural issues and **should not be underestimated. Specific comments on pension reform address:**

- NCW agrees that **further reform** of the **Invalidity pension system** by the Department of Social Security and also that a similar scheme be extended to the Disability pension (while ensuring the necessary support: reskilling and psychological etc)
- **Strengthening Community Care Support: Study the possibility of a pension system to offset the economic impact related to ageing through the introduction of contributions to persons who take care of elderly or long term sick persons, especially those who opt out of the labour market to carry out these duties**
- Increase in pensionable age for **entitlement to a non-contributory Old Age Pension needs careful study** before implementation to ensure there is no risk of poverty in the proposed changes. 21B NCW agrees with the proposed mechanism to be sensitive to old age sickness or diseases
- The introduction of **incrementally entitlement to full pension in the case of the surviving female spouse** who would have contributed to the said pension though her role **as a home carer** throughout her life
- NCW agrees that the **widow's pension should not be forfeited** if the said widow has dependent children over 21 works and earns an income from a gainful activity that exceeds the yearly average minimum wage
- The need to amend the Social Security Act with regards to **persons who have a gap in work of five years due to following higher education to be allowed to fill those gaps according to the date of application**
- The need to **adopt appropriate legislation with regards to divorced or cohabiting partners** to safeguard their interests and protect their pension rights
- NCW believes that in depth expertise study should be carried out , together with proper training for public officers, in particular and financial literacy training for the **public prior to the introduction of the Mandatory Second Pension Scheme** . NCW also agrees with **the time frames and mechanisms proposed by the PWG** regarding implementation after an **intensive preparation for all sectors including the general public.**

Boardroom gender quotas – Government's Opposition is deplorable



The Government's decision to oppose the boardroom gender quotas comes as shocking news to the National Council of Women. Currently only 13.7 per cent of board positions in listed European companies are held

by women. Hence the proposal by the Commissioner Vice-President, Viviane Redding, proposal should be welcomed and supported not opposed. It is high time that the Maltese government supports women and aims to reach targets which benefit all – men and women. Having gender balance in the boardroom is about having effective representation, which

means a balanced representation of the Maltese population which is equally made up of males and females. If a number of effective family friendly measures were in place then quotas would have not been necessary but statistics clearly show that not enough is in place for men and women to be equally represented in the board room. Quotas are a temporary measure until the necessary measures are put in place and targets are reached.

Gender quotas help women break the glass ceiling and aim for top positions that were formerly mostly held by men. By this affirmative action we are only providing equal opportunity to previously disadvantaged sex.

The government and businesses should focus on the benefits rather than believing that Malta is not ready for this measure. Malta is ready. Having a gen-

der balance would contribute to better informed and better thought-through decisions. A company's clients are both male and female hence would it not be beneficial for the company to have a gender balanced representation on its board which would lead to products and services which are satisfactory to both sexes? Furthermore, men and women bring different skills to the table hence allowing for board members to address issues in the best possible way. These are just some examples of how quotas can be beneficial and the National Council of Women urges the Government to rethink its position and support the quota system which Malta is ready for. Gender balance is long overdue and opposing it is surely unacceptable.

Dr Roselyn Borg
NCW Executive Member

Recession for Gender Equality in Europe

The economy of European countries after the financial crisis of 2008 is in recession or depression. A rising unemployment and reduced welfare is affecting more and more social groups. Another effect of the still ongoing economic crisis is that the evolution of gender equality between men and women declines or stagnates. In the countries hardest hit we find clear indications that women, young people and migrants are at risk of trafficking and prostitution. European NGO's will through their umbrella organization Aretusa jointly highlight various facts about the recession's negative impact on gender development in Europe.

Member associations of Aretusa will jointly focus on three priority areas and challenges;

- The risk that gender issues are forgot-

ten when the European countries and institutions focusing on community and national efforts to address and combat the current economic crisis.

- The need for continued cooperation and transnational partnerships at European level to support social efforts to promote and protect women's rights.
- The need for increased awareness and strengthened efforts at European and national level to further develop equality policies and ensure effective protection measures for trafficking victims at the local level.

A starting point for our work together will be The EU Directive 2011/36/EU on Preventing and combating trafficking. Through joint seminars and national meetings of the member organizations we will work out concrete measures on how the EU, its Member

States and candidate countries can:

- Ensure the continued effective management of the economic crisis without the risk that the aspect of gender equality is forgotten or resisted
- Strengthen and develop the protection of people affected by or vulnerable to trafficking
- Increase awareness and the need to develop the work against discrimination on multiple grounds
- Support the activities of non-profit organisations working for the promotion of gender equality according to EU standards

In review of the above NCW Malta will be organising a Round Table conference on Thursday 1st November at NCW Centre Pope Pius X11 Flats Mountbatten Street Blata l-Bajda

Doris Bingley

European Year for Reconciling Work and Family Life The race for signatures has started

STRASBOURG, 22 October // COFACE, the Confederation of Family Organisations in the European Union is glad to announce that the Written Declaration asking for the designation of 2014 to be the European Year of Reconciling Work and Family Life was presented on Monday 22 October in the European Parliament in Strasbourg.

The written Declaration number 0032/2012 was initiated by Mirian HARKIN (Ireland, ALDE), and the co-signers are: Elisabeth MORIN-CHARTER (France, EPP), Roberta ANGELILLI (Italy, EPP) and Jutta STEINRUCK (Germany, S&D).

Written Declaration 0032/2012 states that "better support for reconciliation measures will enable women and men in all kinds of family models to exercise greater choice in balancing work and family life on the basis of their individual needs and preferences, and will also contribute to achieving major policy objectives of the EU".

The Written Declaration is one of the open and available opportunities for European citizens to directly influence the

European level legislative process. In order to become an official position of the European Parliament, Written Declarations must be signed by at least half of the members if the European Parliament within 3 months. The number if necessary signatures in 378, and our count back starts today.

The Secretariat of COFACE is not in Strasbourg to ask and urge the Members of the European Parliament to sign the Written Declaration nr. 32, said Agnes Uhreczky, COFACE Director, in the hope that many will sign, as hopefully many MEPs will get on board of the initiative, that could make a difference in the lives of many citizens.

COFACE, together with the European Alliance for the EY2014, is trying to bring attention to the fact that creating and promoting policies that enable the reconciliation of work and family life would be a win-win situation – both for individual EU citizens, as well as for the European Union as a whole. More information about this campaign: <http://eyf2014.wordpress.com>

Diary of Events

July

- 3rd - Business Breakfast at the Westin Dargonara. Doris Bingley and Evelyn Vella Brincat attended
- 11th - Laghqa ta' Konsultazjoni – Pjan ta' Azzjoni dwar l-enerġija sal-2050
- 14th - Voluntary Organisation Course about Networking sharing best practice ideas. Marie Demicoli and Nadyanne Mangion attended.
- 17th - Talk by Dr. Stephen Abela organised by the Malta Dementia Society. Mercedes Schembri Wismayer and Nadyanne Mangion attended.
AMIE meeting
MEUSAC – The Financial Cxallenges Ahead. Mary Gaerty attended
- 19th - Grundtvig Visits and Exchange programmes talk by Weaving Consultants.
- 20th - E-Aging Course at Unioni Haddiema Maltin. Marie Demicoli attended.
- 23rd - Executive Committee
- 24th - MEUSAC Meeting on Civil Society Fund. Therese Cassola attended.
- 30th - Consultative Meeting about Cohesion Fund 2014-2020 at Dar l-Ewropa.
- 31st - Meeting at the Directorate for Life Long Learning.
Meeting on Enterprise by the Ministry of Finance with the Malta Association of Family Business. Mary Gaerty attended.

August

- 1st - Minister of Justice, Dialogue and Family, Chris Said visited the National Council of Women.
- 2nd - The Hon. Prime Minister visits NCW for a consultation meeting together with Simon Busutill, MEP.
- 9th - Hon. Ambassador Gina Abercrombie-Wenstanley visits NCW centre.
A number of NCW executive members attended the IVF Seminar by Dr. Porcu.
- 13th - Executive Committee Meeting
- 22nd - Education Committee Meeting
- 24th - MEUSAC – Il-Futur tas-settur tal- Frott u Hxejjex. Bugibba Park, Salina
- 28th - MCESD Meeting. Mary Gaerty attended.
- 31st - Lejla Letterarja.

September

- 6th - MCESD Meeting. Mary Gaerty and Doris Bingley attended.
- 7th - Victory Day Celebrations. Mary Gaerty attended.
- 8th - Mass at St. John's Co-Cathedral. Mary Gaerty and Doris Bingley attended.
- 10th - Executive Committee Meeting
- 11th - Capacity Building in Malta – Seminar at the Palace, Sliema. Doris Bingley attended.
- 17th - ARETUSA meeting in Bergamo. Mary Gaerty attended.
- 18th - Futur tax-Xoghol, Partit Labourist Meeting. Pauline Azzopardi attended.
- 19th - Celebration of peace. Pauline Azzopardi attended.
- 20th - Labour Party Consultation meeting. Mary Gaerty attended.
- 21st - Jum l-Indipendenza Mass at St. John's Co-Cathedral.
Kuncert Orkestrali għall-Jum l-Indipendenza, il-Palazz Presidenzjali. Mary Gaerty attended.
- 24th - National Commission for Furthering Higher Education Launches the National Database of Recognised Qualifications at the Westin Dragonara Hotel
The MIM Conference on Gender Violence Forum 2012 at The Palace, Sliema. Mary Gaerty, Doris Bingley and Pauline Azzopardi attended.
Burden Sharing in Asylum Seekers Talk. Mercedes Schembri Wismayer attended.
- 26th - Developing a macro-regional strategy in the Mediterranean – The benefits for island member states. Pauline Azzopardi and Grace Attard attended.
Video Conference organized by MWCO at ta'Qali. Mary Gaerty attended.
- 27th - Pilgrimage and Holly Mass for the commemoration of the Statue of the Infant Jesus of Prague.
Closer to Europe- Social and Civil Dialogue Closing Conference in Gozo. Doris Bingley and Marie Demicoli attended.
- 28th - Mary Gaerty NET Television guest on Domestic Violence.
Working breakfast by the Ministry of Finance at the Xara Lodge, Rabat. Doris Bingley and Mari Demicoli attended.



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FORTH COMING EVENTS

NCW Christmas Celebrations at the Casino Maltese Valletta on Tuesday 18th December 2012 at 7.30p.m.

The BMV Music Competition first prize winner **Maria Elena Farrugia** will give a **piano recital** followed by **Soprano Arienne Gaerty**. A lavish reception will follow. All proceeds will go towards the BMV Music fund.

We urge all members and friends to attend including spouses and partners. For reservations please send payment of **20 euro per person** to the National Council of Women Pope Pius XI Flats Mountbatten Street, Blata l-Bajda. Early booking is recommended.

Round Table Discussion at NCW Centre on Thursday 1st November 2012

The National Council of Women invites NCW Members and Affiliated Organisations to participate in the **Round Table entitled, "Poverty Gender and Trafficking"** which is being held at the National Council of Women Centre Mountbatten Street, Blata l-Bajda.

"Women & Climate Change" on Friday 9th November 2012

The Environment Committee of the National Council of Women is organising a seminar entitled, "Women & Climate Change" The aim of the seminar is to create more awareness on Climate Change and its effect on women. The seminar will be held on Friday 9th November 2012 at Dar l-Ewropa at 9.00am. Registration is free. Kindly register by Wednesday 7th November.

Mass for the repose of NCW members on Wednesday 14th November at NCW Centre at 5.30p.m.

Christmas Fair

On November 30th at the National Council of Women Centre, we will be having a sale of cakes, biscuits, costume jewellery, and other items. Doors open at 4.30pm Refreshment will be served during the evening.

Breast Care Support Group Europa Donna

will be hosting a Gala Dinner and Auction at the Hotel Phoenix on Friday 9th November 2012. For more information kindly contact Mrs Gertrude Abela gertrude@europadonnamalta.org.mt



Notice for Members of the Association for Consumer Rights, Malta

The President of the Consumer Rights Association would like to invite you to the first information meeting to be held on Wednesday 28 November at NCW Centre Blata, l-Bajda at 6.00pm. The interactive session will be conducted by Ms Joyce Borg, Director MCCA. A detailed agenda of the meeting will be sent to you in the next few dates

For booking and further details please contact the office on 21248881 or 21246982 between 9.30am and 2.30pm or email ncwmalta@camline.net.mt

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