

# **National Council of Women**



## **Electoral Proposals**

**2013**



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## NCW Electoral Proposals 2013

### General Introduction

Addressing the gender dimension in a range of areas including the labour market, political and economic decision-making, gender-based violence, mental health, R&D and education is the priority of the National Council of Women. These areas need to be addressed as cross-cutting issues based in the socio-economic context of the Maltese culture and current and future developments

Consequently, growth together with productive and high-quality employment must remain the key response in addressing the demographic challenge. **Targeted growth policy and more jobs** that require social security contributions are important in starting points that need to be reflected in the National Reform Programme.

The need to **ensure the long-term sustainability of public finances is a priority**. Addressing public deficit should be carried out through **better deployment of public servants and adequate training** to reduce waste of time and resources and increase productivity and efficiency, rather than measures aimed at reducing the number of public servants.

At economic policy level, **it is necessary to create a functioning labour market (active labour market policies) for younger and older people, women in different situations (single mothers, teenage mothers, family carers) where they actually have opportunities to find work and keep that work over the long term; sustainability can only be achieved by ensuring equal balance between these two priorities in the medium term and in the long term.**

**Comprehensive strategies aimed at better integration of older people into working life** and, in the longer term, at increasing labour market participation call for a policy that facilitates participation, i.e. making working conditions and training systems favourable to older people, creating high quality and productive jobs and ensuring efficient social security systems.(workplace innovation)

The most pressing tasks in meeting the demographic challenge lie not so much in reforming pension systems themselves, **but in improving employment possibilities for older people, making working conditions favourable to them, making it easier to reconcile work and family life for both parents, ensuring a solid education for young people and providing for continuous professional development**

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## 1. The Council of Europe Convention on Domestic Violence

*Instruments for EU member States to effectively address Gender-based Violence*

### 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.

### Recommendations submitted by The European Parliamentary Committee on Women’s Rights

- 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)
- 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
- 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
- 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

## 2. Stop Violence against Girls and Young Women

### Justification

The national authorities support local and national efforts to end violence against women and girls, and several NGOs empower women to claim their rights and direct the society at large towards “zero tolerance”, despite this domestic violence is still a real problem which leads to a situation where all forms of violence against women seriously violate, impair or nullify the enjoyment by women of

human rights and/or fundamental freedoms and constitute a major impediment to the ability of women to make use of their capabilities and to lead a dignified life.

## **Recommendations**

### **1. Amending the age of criminal responsibility and addressing violence against children in the national draft child policy**

The MGG calls upon the government to strengthen the existing laws in the best interests of the child by enacting the national draft child policy which aims to adopt a holistic and integrated approach to promoting child focus programmes and actions. Amongst its many proposals, the draft policy recommends, raising the age of criminal responsibility that currently stands at nine years. According to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child ‘a minimum age of criminal responsibility below the age of twelve years is considered by the Committee not to be internationally acceptable’ Evidently, this change in age requires careful study as there are no agreed indicators of how to assess one’s capacity and ethical understanding and therefore cannot be treated as a one-size-fits-all. It is imperative to educate young children from an early age detecting signs of all forms of violence at home or at school and to provide adequate services to eliminate violence from taking place in the first place, also involving the parents in the process. The policy also proposes severing punishment for child abuse and amending the Care Orders Act to remove discrepancies between children placed in care by their family and those under a government care order; during separation procedures children are given the opportunity to voice their opinion with regards choosing parent they prefer living with.

### **2. Harsher and more effective sanctions for perpetrators of rape, stalking and child abuse to act as deterrents**

Perpetrators of such violence must be duly investigated and, as appropriate, prosecuted and punished in order to end impunity. The judiciary must treat all forms of violence against women and girls as a criminal offence, punishable by law, and ensures that penalties commensurate with the severity of the crimes and sanctions in domestic legislation to punish and redress, as appropriate, the wrongs caused to girls and young women who were subjected to violence. Perpetrators must also follow rehabilitation programmes to avoid recidivism. Serious attention needs to be given in cases of underage rape victims, which although addressed by law, should safeguard the rights of the child, even if there is so called ‘provocation’. Moreover, the sex offenders register must be given more weight.

### **3. Better Protection and support to Victims**

Officials who work close to victims must receive proper training to be informed about the different and specific needs of girls and women who have been subjected to violence so that women do not end up as victims when seeking justice. Legal assistance and appropriate safeguards must be in place to protect victims and be available immediately once the report is done. Officials must follow the reports efficiently and effectively to rescue victims and potential victims. Evidently, more 24 hour women shelters are needed. There has to be continuity between filing the police report, providing victims with the right information, removing the perpetrator from the home so the victim and children are in their normal environment and not *vice versa*. More needs to be done with regards prevention measures, such as early detection and education to women and relatives on how to act as early as possible to avoid risks

### 3. Proposal for a Directive of the European Parliament and of the Council on improving the gender balance among non-executive directors of companies listed on stock exchanges and related measures COM(2012) 614 final – 2012/0299 (COD).

#### Justification

The role of women on boards has been being scrutinised for decades, but especially over the last two years as the EU has renewed its commitment to the promotion of gender equality on boards of listed companies. The debate has ranged from introducing legally-binding quotas to self-imposed regulations without repercussions for non-compliance. Effective, voluntary approaches are still slow. **There was only a 0.6% improvement in the number of women on boards in the last year**, with only 24 companies having signed the 2011 Pledge.

Member States' measures lie along a continuum ranging from legally-binding quotas with sanctions to self-regulation in specific sectors, and, as expected, the representation of women on boards is equally varied. However **countries with binding quotas generally demonstrate a 20% increase in women on boards**. Six countries that have not implemented any action have experienced a reduction in the number of women on boards.

By the end of 2011, 11 Member States had adopted laws establishing quotas or targets for gender representation on company boards. France, Italy and Belgium have established quotas including sanctions for non-compliance; Spain and the Netherlands have adopted quota laws without sanctions; Denmark, Finland, Greece, Austria and Slovenia have implemented rules applicable only to boards of state-controlled companies; and in Germany the gender dimension is covered by regulations covering workers' representations on boards.

With current levels of attainment, **France is the only country on course to achieve the target of 40% female representation on boards by 2020**. If current levels of female board representation are extrapolated further, the EU as a whole will not achieve 40% female representation by 2040<sup>1</sup>.

The directive sets a timeframe for implementation of the quantitative objective of 40% by 2020 to allow for the cycle of board appointments within individual companies. The directive also has a sunset clause of 2028, after which time it should no longer be required.

Only an EU-level measure that is flexible in order to take account of diversity across Member States whilst fully respecting the principle of subsidiarity can optimise the potential of female talent. Over 51% of the EU's population is female, with women accounting for 45% of employment and women providing the driving force behind more than 70% of purchasing decisions.

51% of the EU population are female. Many are highly educated and skilled, and thus are an important contributor to the workforce. Female students outnumber their male counterparts at tertiary education level, resulting in **50% more highly qualified women than men available in the labour market**.

The Davies report identified a gap in the UK workforce which could be compensated for by the recruitment of 2 million qualified workers over the next 10 years, most of which would need to be highly qualified women<sup>2</sup>. Moreover, female economic participation has far-reaching financial and social benefits for countries. The Global Gender Gap Index for 2011 demonstrated that **countries with higher gender equality had a higher GDP per capita**<sup>3</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Impact assessment document.

<sup>2</sup> Davies, Women on Boards, One Year On, March 2012 <http://www.bis.gov.uk/assets/biscore/business-law/docs/w/12-p135-women-on-boards-2012.pdf>.

<sup>3</sup> Global Gender Gap Index for 2011; World Economic Forum, <http://www.uis.unesco.org/>.

## Recommendations

**Greater transparency in the** process of recruitment onto boards is largely opaque, relying on personal networks. To attract the broadest range of talent, opportunities need to be promoted and presented in a manner that encourages applications from all talented individuals. Building and retaining a critical mass – The value of diverse thinking on a board is only realised when there is enough of a critical mass to challenge assumptions; it is therefore imperative for women to make up 40% of membership on a board. Increased transparency during the recruitment process will ensure the widest range of candidates are considered and remove the risk of the "golden skirt" rule<sup>4</sup>.

**Challenging stereotypes around gendered roles** – A lot of progress has been made regarding domestic roles constituting barriers to female economic participation. The measures are a step in the right direction and will serve to help increase participation of women on boards.

**Creation of a pipeline** – The sustained benefit of diverse boards requires a steady stream of highly-qualified individuals who have both the aspiration and the aptitude to take on board positions. It is imperative to create an environment that enables women to navigate their way through the labyrinth<sup>5</sup> during their careers and achieve board positions. A strong pipeline will emerge from the above points; the presence of female role models, more transparent recruitment processes and clear leadership succession planning provide the foundations for gender diversity on boards.

## 4. Addressing the Fertility Rate and Work/life Balance

### Justification/s

In line with the priorities of the EU2020 Strategy, there is the need **for a national policy, a package of maternity, paternity and family-friendly measures for both the public and private sector whilst taking into consideration the situation of SMEs to increase the participation of women in the labour market and at the same time take responsibility for the social aspect and health and safety of both mother and child.**

As 2014 has been established as the EU Year for Family and Work, a holistic approach is necessary so that all stakeholders are involved in making this year and its follow-up in practice

The NRP should aim at strengthening the policy where both men and women have equal access to employment, not least in view of the current demographic deficit, **giving priority to low rates of female participation, and eliminating the obstacles through effective active labour market policies, flexicurity and vocational training.**

Although a number of financial incentives have been introduced by government in the last 5 years, the participation rate of women in the labour market has increased by 4% only. **Therefore there is the need to address the real obstacles which concern increasing time spent with the children in the most crucial times such as during the post-natal period among others**

### NCW recommendations

- **introducing financial incentives for private sector who introduce positive action of maternity and parental leave**
- **Research study on the cost of non-participation of women of child rearing age in different occupations (already carried out)**

<sup>4</sup>

<http://www.jump.eu.com>.

<sup>5</sup>

See "Through the Labyrinth: The Truth About How Women Become Leaders" by Alice Eagly and Linda Carli.

- **Use of EU Structural funds and ETC Schemes to support the workers during maternity and paternity leave**
- **Although the legal framework for Temping Agencies is in place, there is the need to address the obstacles that are hindering the growth of Temping Agencies, which besides providing practical solutions for more work/life balance, can be another source of job creation if adequate action is taken**
- **Collective agreements with options to include Lifelong Learning opportunities by employers for women and men on parental leave or career breaks**
- **Government needs to further expand and subsidise care services for children and for sick, disabled and elderly people, and enhancing their accessibility, through private/public partnerships through Structural Funds**
- **Introduce a framework for child minding services within the community for those mothers who can use adequate facilities at their home to offer the services**
- **Legal provision on paternity leave in order to encourage sharing care responsibilities between mothers and fathers to be raised to 2 weeks non-transferable.**
- **At tertiary and University level, further opportunities should be provided through R&D programmes in particular to increase female participation in Mathematics, Science and Technology to encourage transferring and establishing of an enterprise (refer to AMIE project). This should also be strongly addressed through the MCST policies and ESF**

## **5. The Involvement and Participation of Older People in Society**

### ***Follow-up of the EU Year of Active Ageing and Intergenerational Solidarity 2012***

#### **Justification/s**

NCW has been at the forefront of activities both at National and EU level during the European Year for Active Ageing and Intergenerational Solidarity 2012. A member of the NCW Executive Committee was in fact appointed Ambassador for the Elderly for 2012. NCW believes that there should be a strong National Policy for the Elderly to ensure that the outcome of the work carried out in 2012 is continued and enhanced in the coming years

Older people are dynamic, capable and vital members of our society. They pass on knowledge, skills and experience to the next generations. As individuals and collectively they contribute to our economy, to our neighbourhoods and to carrying our history. As family members older people are responsible for encouraging cohesion and solidarity in our society.

There are currently 85 million people over the age of 65 in Europe and this will rise to 151 million by 2060. It is important not to just focus on chronological age but to recognise and build capacity to participate at all ages and to appreciate that even if older people (defined for the purposes of this opinion as over 65) experience health limitations it does not necessarily prevent them from being engaged. "Active social, cultural, economic and political participation of older people relies on a correct image of age<sup>6</sup>". We must discourage the use of overly dramatic language by the media and governments to describe an ageing society.

#### **Objectives**

- to highlight the current active participation of older people in Malta in line with its European counterparts,
- to consider the barriers to enabling more people to be engaged, and
- to emphasise that such participation continues throughout person's lifetime. Building an age friendly<sup>7</sup> Europe starts at birth and requires the long view.

<sup>6</sup>

6th Report on the situation of older generation in the Federal Republic of Germany.

<sup>7</sup>

"Stakeholder Manifesto for an Age Friendly European Union by 2020", Age Platform Europe, 2011.



## **Recommendations**

- the focus be put on the capacity and contribution of older people and not on their chronological age, and that governments, NGOs and the media highlight these elements in positive statements;
- support be given for the active participation of all age groups in society and to greater solidarity and cooperation between and within generations;
- governments and statutory agencies make a positive commitment to the active participation of older people in decision-making and to their role in communities;
- governments work with appropriate partners to eliminate any barriers that prevent older people from fully participating in society;
- all stakeholders continue to develop an approach that emphasises life-long learning for individual older people, employers and communities;
- governments ensure the digital inclusion and training of older people;
- older people stand for election, vote and take part as board members in companies, public authorities and NGOs;
- the contribution of informal care givers and recipients be recognised and their respective rights and responsibilities properly supported;
- older people be encouraged to volunteer in accordance with good practice guidelines;
- it be made possible for older workers to stay in employment until the statutory retirement age and beyond, if they so wish;
- employers adapt the working environment and find contractual arrangements to meet the needs of older workers;
- older people be recognised as consumers and that businesses be encouraged to produce goods and services that respond to the needs of an ageing society.
- **A review of Insurance Policies for the over 70s in particular for Travel Insurance Policies to address age-discrimination where it is practised**
- **More effective measures to address the gender dimension in pension systems**

## **6. A National Framework to address Social Enterprise at National and EU level**

### **B Towards a Foundation Statue in line with a European Foundation Statute**

#### **Justification/s**

**“Social Europe can be translated into business opportunities and much-needed job creation. In the current crisis situation, where the number of people without a job or access to economic resources is steadily increasing, the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) wants to strengthen growth, employment and competitiveness, through social enterprises while creating a more inclusive society that is in line with the Europe 2020 strategy”(Luca Jahier EESC President of Group III Various Interests Group)**

**The wide range and diversity of the NGO Sector reflects the importance the Maltese Society gives to voluntary work. NCW believes that, due to socio-economic developments in Malta and in Europe, not least the problems that need to be addressed as a result of the financial crisis there is an urgent need to take the necessary steps to ensure NGOs and Foundations are sustainable. The necessary measures can be taken within the framework for the development of social enterprise in Malta**

#### **Recommendation/s**

**A. Further to APS Bank studies and recommendations on the development of social enterprises**

- Evaluation of the situation in Malta on the situation of NGOs and their prospective development to engage in social enterprise

- The role of the Commission and the Council for the Voluntary Sector in working with stakeholders for the development of sustainable social enterprise
- Sharing practices of existing examples of social enterprise in Malta
- Social enterprises should enjoy a level playing field with traditional economic operators.
- Measures to be taken to overcome legal, administrative, financial and political obstacles despite the richness and the innovative leadership which exists at all levels of the sector, with the aim of creating a more inclusive society and address the risk of unemployment, in particular of vulnerable groups, including women, youth and disabled people
- That Malta participates in the EU project which aims at mapping social enterprises, through an EU-wide comparison of approaches to public financing that are particularly suitable for social enterprises, proposed by the EESC, as stated by László Andor, European Commissioner for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion

#### **B. Towards a Foundation Statute in line with a European Foundation Statute and access to public procurement**

- Malta should take the necessary measures to introduce a Foundation Statute on the lines of a European Foundation Statute. This is crucial to defend the role of social enterprises in providing services of general interest.
- Malta together with other Member States should facilitate participation in public procurements to economic operators whose principal objective is the social and professional integration of disabled or disadvantaged workers, provided that a threshold of 30% of disabled or disadvantaged workers is respected.
- In line with the EESC proposal, NCW urges for the rapid introduction of a European Foundation Statute, the adoption of a Statute for a European Association and a review of the value and usability of a European Social Enterprises label that would definitely add value to the sector. These would help social enterprises to operate in different EU Member States without any extra administrative burden.
- Finally, in line with the EESC, NCW urges that a mobilisation of the European Social Fund post 2014 should include "investment priority" for social enterprises and a better access to other funds such as capital for start-ups and growth, notably for young social entrepreneurs. As László Andor, European Commissioner for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion stated, "cohesion policy funds can be used even better in the future, especially if they would be employed in the context of a truly integrated strategy"

## **7. Volunteering - Investing in Human Resources**

### **The European Year of Volunteering 2011**

- The valuable contribution made by those many citizens who, by volunteering in a variety of areas, place themselves at the service of society and social cohesion should be given recognition. In line with the EU Commission, **NCW** proposes the following **recommendations** for a successful outcome and follow-up of the EU Year 2011 and its follow-up on Volunteering :
- 1. The creation of an enabling environment will help anchor volunteering as part of promoting civic participation and people-to-people activities. Strengthening the legal framework is necessary to secure the infrastructure required for voluntary work at local, regional, national and European level and to make it easier for people to get involved. Furthermore, the requisite financial and political conditions must be in place to remove any obstacles to voluntary work.
- 2. To facilitate volunteering and to encourage networking, mobility and cooperation, voluntary organisations are to be empowered and the quality of the activity improved.

- Promoting voluntary organisations as places and catalysts for civic engagement is crucial: these organisations are for the most part the first and only contact point for volunteers and have often been set up by volunteers themselves. In 2011, particular attention should be paid to exchanges of experience and to improving the capacity and quality of work of voluntary organisations, which are the backbone of civil society and voluntary participation.
- Volunteering activities are to be rewarded and recognised, not least by encouraging appropriate incentives for individuals, business and organisations Improving quality - "professionalisation". The main aim is to safeguard the quality of volunteering activity. Volunteers have the right to invest their free time in sectors they enjoy. Their commitment provides a service to society, to individuals – and also to themselves.
- Promoting employee volunteering in co-operation with employers in the private sector
- Action is needed to secure the funding and staffing required to raise skills levels, to provide, further education and training and to give support during voluntary work
- The general public are to be made more aware of the value and importance of volunteering.
- Raising awareness among the general public requires sufficient resources through an effective and successful awareness-raising campaign conveying the opportunities and usefulness of volunteering
- Although regulation is necessary to ensure transparency and accountability, there is the need to ensure that this will not result in over-regulation which can create obstacles to the current healthy involvement in the voluntary sector in Malta

## 8. The European Year of Citizens 2013

### Justification/s

The European Commission has designated 2013 as the *European Year of Citizens*<sup>8</sup>. The European Economic and Social Committee stresses that citizens play a central role in securing Europe's future and integration.

The major future challenges facing Europe and its people require the setting of priorities for this European Year. The low level of confidence that people have in the European Union, their scepticism about their power to influence EU decisions, apathy and the lack of involvement in the decision-making process are fundamentally detrimental to the spirit of the EU and impair the quality of decisions and the Union's long term development

In order to pursue good practice and provide maximum access and coordination for these actions, Liaison Group members representing European civil society organisations and networks, together with other partners and with the support of the EESC, have created an alliance for implementing the thematic year. This alliance is ready to take on a major role in taking the year forward and framing additional recommendations.

### Recommendation/s

- The main aim of this European Year must be active, participatory citizenship
- This Year should focus on how EU policies match up with the values, interests and needs of its citizens.
- Its aim should therefore be the **informed participation** of all EU citizens at all levels and at every stage of the decision-making process, all aspects of **active citizenship**, as well as **European awareness and a feeling of belonging to Europe**, and peace, freedom, the rule of law, equality, solidarity and respect for human rights.
- Focus should be on the principle of **citizens' equality** enshrined in Article 9 TEU<sup>9</sup>.

<sup>8</sup> [COM\(2011\) 489 final – 2011/0217 \(COD\).](#)

<sup>9</sup> [OJ C 83, 30.3.2010.](#)

- Attention should be paid to groups of citizens suffering discrimination and **multiple discrimination**. Specific measures should be taken to guarantee that all citizens have the same opportunities for exercising their right to participate, their economic and social rights and for exercising their other rights, regardless of **their origin and citizenship, age, particular needs, state of health, wealth, religious beliefs, family situation or other characteristics of the same nature. Total equality must be ensured between men and women**<sup>10</sup>.
- Special attention should be devoted to **combating radical or antidemocratic** ideologies and activities.
- Particular attention should be paid to citizens' right to receive **assistance** from the **diplomatic and consular missions** of other Member States when they are in a third country.
- The mobility of individuals should also be considered in the context of **demographic** trends, and that its beneficial effects **on employability and competitiveness** should be recognised. Mobility of individuals thus also means allowing citizens to benefit from the advantages of the single market and helping to achieve the growth targets of the EU 2020 Strategy
- Initiatives need to work towards **encouraging, developing, implementing and complying with European legislation in many areas such as consumer rights, the movement of goods, services and capital, healthcare, education, the right to vote and freely stand for elections to the European Parliament when in another EU Member State, knowledge of languages, intercultural and social skills, together with other social and economic rights and guarantees.**
- The administrative bodies of the various institutions at both European and national level should delay no further in working towards achieving these objectives through a process of close dialogue with civil society organisations at every stage and every level (local, national, European) of the decision making process.
- The Commission should produce practical proposals, including white papers on the **full implementation of Articles 10 and 11 TEU**. The introduction of the citizens' initiative (Article 11(4) TEU) and the other mechanisms put in place to date are not enough to ensure society's full participation. A discussion should be launched right away on possible ways of supplementing these tools<sup>11</sup>.
- Action is also needed to **supplement the existing mechanisms** for dialogue and participation and the **adoption of good practices**<sup>12</sup>
- It is important to improve cooperation between the EU institutions and also between the European level and the national bodies working on questions relating to the Union, including governments, the national parliaments and civil society, to mention just these few stakeholders. The aim should be to make decision-making as open and transparent as possible.
- The level of funding should be appropriate, fixed and in proportion to the importance of the goal,. The reduced budget (down from some EUR 17 million for 2010 to around EUR 1 million for 2013) will not allow major issues to be addressed.

## 9. Women and Climate Change

### Justification/s

- a. Climate Change is not gender-neutral and has specific gender differentiated effects. Consumption and lifestyle patterns are a significant impact on Climate Change.
- b. Studies show that women consume more sustainably than men and show greater willingness to act to preserve the environment by making sustainable consumption choices.

<sup>10</sup>

See particularly the REX/307 file, rapporteur Ms Sharma, and [Flash Eurobarometer 294](#), published in October 2010. The groups that least understand the meaning of European citizenship include women and manual workers.

<sup>11</sup>

[OJ C 376, 22.12.2011, p.74.](#)

<sup>12</sup>

See also the INGO Conference, CONF/PLE(2009)CODEI, 2009

- c. Women's impact on the environment is not the same as men's and their access to resources and ways to cope and adapt is severely affected by discrimination in terms of income, access to resources, political power, education and household responsibility.
- d. NCW points out with concern the negative impact climate change may have on the achievements of the UN Millennium Development Goals, in particular those linked to the condition and protection of women.

## **Recommendations**

- A. In the drafting of national policies on climate change, relevant authorities and stakeholders need to
  - **set up the necessary mechanisms for Gender mainstreaming in all areas directly or indirectly linked to Climate Change**
  - acknowledge women's firsthand experience and knowledge about what is needed to ameliorate the effects of climate change can contribute immensely to government efforts to identify mitigation and adaptation strategies
  - ensure the inclusion and participation of Maltese women at multiple levels in mitigation and adaptation efforts which is vital to climate change
  - acknowledge that at the family and community level, women often take primary responsibility for household recycling, efficient energy use, the purchase and preparation of food and education and care of family members.
  - that Government ensures that climate action does not increase gender inequalities but results in co-benefits to the situation of women,
  - that the gender perspective is mainstreamed and integrated in every step of climate policies, from conception to financing, implementation and evaluation.
  - that when planning, implementing and evaluating climate change policies, programmes and projects, indicators from the collection of Malta's specific and gender disaggregated data are reflected in the national policies, in order to effectively:
    1. assess the contribution of women to climate change and
    2. address the differing effects of climate change on each gender.
  - that a relevant guide is produced on adapting to climate change, outlining policies that can protect and empower women to cope with the effects of climate change.
  - that in the drafting of policies and their implementation, there is commitment to ensure that a series of actions aimed at addressing the health risks for both men and women associated with climate change are given priority and
  - the need to provide a framework for gender-based health risk assessments and adaptation/mitigation measures in relation to climate change.

## **B. Migration and Displacement**

Migration and displacement will increase in the future, due to climate change therefore the importance that urgent research is required on how to manage environmental migration in a gender-sensitive manner.

## **Recommendations**

- Government should reiterate the importance of identifying gender-sensitive strategies for responding to the environmental and humanitarian crises caused by climate change
- NCW to represent the gender dimension on the Malta Climate Change Advisory Council
- NCW to network with women's organisations in the Euromed region to address the environmental, social and humanitarian crises referred to above. NCW to advocate for gender mainstreaming in national/regional climate change policies and international negotiations via its activities relating to Euromed, EU and the Commonwealth, which should also be promoted during the Union for the Mediterranean ministerial meeting on Gender during this year (to be confirmed) and the Commonwealth Summit in November 2013

- NCW to become a member of the Global Gender and Climate Change Alliance, [www.ggca.org](http://www.ggca.org). NCW to address climate change issues at EU and Global level on the recommendations of the UN

## 10. Managing climate change as a key aspect of the EU 2020 strategy requires a holistic approach through an energy mix policy

- Promoting energy efficiency and renewable energy will, in addition to drawing on the environmental sector, be a key element of the post-2010 strategy.
- The renewed strategy must include an action plan for a low-carbon economy. Having put in place a comprehensive legislative framework for energy and climate change, the EU should now concentrate on practical implementation. Effective policy measures should be integrated into the integrated guidelines, country-specific recommendations and national reform programmes.

## 11. Gender Balance in Research, Science and Technology

### Background

NCW has been a pioneer in raising awareness of the situation in Malta. Through its Vice-President it set up an *ad hoc* Committee together with the Malta Council for Science and Technology, (MCST), the Maltese Helsinki Group representative. The Committee brought together a number of stakeholders to prepare a policy for Malta and to address specific obstacles that Maltese women are facing in R&D.

Following the presentation of the draft policy to the MCST CEO, a meeting was held during which a decision was taken that the Annual MCST Policy document would incorporate the gender dimension, so far missing. The first initiative of the *ad hoc* Committee was to organise a Training Session by a European Agency for key stakeholders, from Academia, Education and Industry for a holistic approach to the theme. (Title of Training Session: ***Gender in Research as a Mark of Excellence***, Monday 22 October 2012)

In the meantime, the EU Commission published a Communication ***on European Research Area Partnership and Growth*** ; an EESC Study Group is currently discussing the EU Communication, making its recommendations which will be approved by the EESC Plenary in the second week of January, (INT 662) The Maltese EESC representative is participating in this work and is also the President of the Study Group

### Justification/s

The number of female researchers in Europe has grown significantly in recent years in practically all sectors. 45% of PhD graduates are women, but only 30% of active researchers are female (and just 19% in senior academic positions). On average, only 13% of high-level research or Science Institutes are headed by women, and only 9% of universities<sup>13</sup>.

In the private sector, the highest proportions of women researchers are found in areas relating to agriculture and medicine, the lowest in engineering and technology. This is in spite of the fact that there is evidence that mixed research teams perform better, benefiting from wider expertise, knowledge sharing, diverse points of view and a higher level of social intelligence.

Women's academic careers remain marked by strong vertical segregation: women constitute a higher proportion of university students (55%) and graduates (59%) than men, but men overtake

<sup>13</sup>

See Figures preliminary data 2012, *Gender in Research and Innovation: Statistics and Indicators*, Helsinki Group on Women and Science – European Commission <http://ec.europa.eu>.

women at the higher levels. Women hold only 44% of junior academic posts, 36% of tenured posts and 18% of professorships. The glass ceiling remains firmly in place, as does labour segregation.

**The gender pay gap** continues in the academic field and research centres. Factors contributing to this include supposedly "neutral" job description systems that ignore gender inequalities, the burden of unshared family responsibilities and the persistence of direct and indirect discrimination<sup>14</sup>.

Not all Member States have national policies to encourage **gender mainstreaming in research**. If gender mainstreaming in research content is not enhanced, the ERA's aims regarding high levels of excellence will be negatively affected

### **Recommendation/s**

NCW, in line with its EU counterparts, particularly welcomes the EU Commission decision to ensure a female presence of at least 40% on all committees involved in recruitment and drafting and/or reviewing project evaluation criteria, or establishing staff policies in academic, research and scientific centres and ***strongly recommends***

- Ending a waste of talent that Europe cannot afford by implementing complete gender equality and gender mainstreaming in Research, Science and Technology
- In line with the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC), NCW Malta calls on the Commission and the Member States to redouble their efforts to effectively eradicate remaining gender inequalities in academia, research and science.
- more specifically to ensure that all committees involved in recruitment, drafting and/or reviewing
- project evaluation criteria, or establishing staff policies in academic, research and scientific centres are at least 40% women.
- that women are fully and actively involved in the entire process of the establishment, implementation and evaluation of actions plans for gender equality in universities and research centres
- Urges the Commission to ensure that organised civil society is involved in preparing the recommendation
- that is to set out the guidelines for institutional changes, promoting real equality between women and men in universities and research centres.

Increasing the time allocated for Malta Personal and Social Development (PSD) sessions on Gender Equality

## **12. Gender Equality Sessions in PSD**

### **Background**

The topic gender in PSD is tackled through the following objectives:

#### ***Primary curriculum:***

The topic *Gender* is given importance in the General Aims of the Syllabus for Primary Schools under the heading of *Growing Up*.

*"Furthermore, children are becoming aware of the different ways in which society treats males and females and gender expectations placed on them. Therefore, discussing gender equality from the point of view of the children is crucial at this point."*

### **Year 4**

Learning Outcomes:

Gender 1. To explore what children understand by everyone being either a boy or a girl

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The European Parliament resolution adopted in March 2011 underlines that, despite countless campaigns, targets and measures in recent years, the gender pay gap remains stubbornly wide. Women across the EU earn 17.5% less on average than men, while representing 60% of new university graduates.

2. To allow boys and girls to share equal talents, characteristics, strengths, and hopes for their future.

### **Year 5**

Learning Outcomes:

- Gender 1. To distinguish how family, friends, the media, and society expect boys and girls to behave.
2. To think about how sometimes children receive different treatment because they are boys or girls.

### **Year 6**

Learning Outcomes:

- Gender 1. To explore friendships between boys and girls and the mutual respect that should exist.
2. To have children reflect on the roles of both genders as carers.

### ***Secondary curriculum:***

**Form 1** PSD 7.4 Roles and Responsibilities within different social contexts

#### **OBJECTIVES**

The teacher will:

1. enable the students to reflect on the stereotypical messages that media can portray
2. enable the students to reflect how gender stereotypes can affect one's life choices

**Form 2** PSD 8.1 Establishing a positive environment

1. enable the students to understand that everyone is of equal worth and that it is acceptable to be different

**Form 2** PSD 8.3 Promoting the use of social skills

#### **OBJECTIVES:**

The teacher will:

1. enable the students to identify different feelings in self and others and to recognize one's values whilst respecting the values of others
2. enable the students to reflect on the effects of bullying due to religious beliefs, gender, race, sexual orientation, disability, age and social background

**Form 3** PSD Gender Stereotypes

- To help students explore the gender stereotypes regarding relationships they encounter through film and media.
- To understand how these stereotypes effect their personal dating relationships.

**Form 5** PSD Gender Equalities

- To recognise that gender role influences the various roles taken on in life.
- To identify that gender behaviour could influence their work related behaviour.

### **Gender Equality Education in the PSD Teacher Training Courses**

Besides the 6 ECTS study units on gender issues, the theme of gender issues permeates across each and every study unit for PSD teacher trainees, examples:

- Interpersonal skills
- Intrapersonal skills
- Sexuality
- Methodology
- Strategies and techniques
- Related issues, such as addiction
- Ethical behaviour



- Abuse
- Career education
- Family roles

#### **Justification/s**

- a. Time allotted to PSD sessions is not enough – in a single session, there is not enough time to deal with gender equality themes. Despite being tackled in every Form, in a single session, students do not have adequate time to analyse, discuss and experience as follow-up, the arguments put forward. In general students find PSD sessions very effective, however they wish that they have more sessions since PSD deals with lifeskills.

#### **Recommendation/s**

**A. Drawing up specific programmes to be mainstreamed** across the curriculum **and more specifically in PSD Sessions**, for students, girls and boys, at different levels of education with adequate communication techniques for young people today, to help them become more engaged in the following

- the principle of respect regarding gender equality
- gender mainstreaming
- EU and National legal aspects of the rights of men and women.
- the role of father figure in family care and responsibilities
- sharing responsibilities in the home
- gender balance at the workplace, including choice of careers, equal pay for work of equal value
- family-friendly measures
- gender balance in Research, Science and Technology
- occupational health and safety at the workplace

#### **B. PSD Sessions**

- a. In order to be more effective, PSD sessions require more time - a double session instead of a single slot session so that such a topic like gender equity would be tackled both as a concept (theoretically) and in practice (implemented).
- b. More awareness about gender equity through the media.
- c. More available videos about gender equity for PSD teachers to be used during lessons on such topic.
- d. More resources about gender equity for PSD teachers to be used during the PSD lessons.
- e. At post-secondary and tertiary education level, students do not have PSD sessions. As a result, students don't have space where to discuss lifeskills including gender equity. Research shows that personal and social competences at this educational level will help to develop the holistic development of the person, including the perception about gender equity.
- f. Proposing to the Education Department to introduce the Booklet '*My Life My Health*' published by 'Breast Cancer Support Europa Donna Malta for young girls of the 12 to 15 age group. The booklet deals with the different phase in life and the different social, environmental aspects that young people engage in and that influence the choices we make regarding lifestyles

### **13. Women Asylum Seekers – Dignity and Work**

#### **Justification/s**

A. Women Asylum seekers try to work to enhance their situation and that of their family and many times they are abused in many ways;

Examples:

- a. if they have a working permit and are contributing by paying NI contributions and find themselves out of a job, they do not receive any social benefits

- b. if they have a job, such as with a cleaning company their employer does not give them an adequate contract.

### **Recommendations**

These issues are covered by the International Labour Organisation (ILO) Decent Work Agenda which should strictly be followed

- a. the relevant authorities need to address these and other situations of precarious work
- b. the asylum seekers need to be given adequate information on their rights and where to seek help
- c. The Employment and Training Corporation – ETC with the cooperation of the Emigrants Commission should provide the necessary training and assistance
- d. The working conditions should be scrutinized by a relevant authority and access to the works tribunal should be available to all workers
- e. If jobs are lost or these people are made redundant social benefits to which they are entitled should be provided so they can continue to support their family and live in the community
- f. the conditions of work of asylum seekers are to be aligned with national legislation and the need to ensure strong mechanisms are in place to curb abuse

## **14A Normalising Childbirth**

### **Justification/s**

- a. Maternity care in Malta is over medicalised, to the detriment of women, babies and families. Recent data shows that the rate of artificially induced births is 36%, the caesarean section rate is 33% and the rate of mothers who are breastfeeding when they leave the hospital is 61%. The European Perinatal Report published in December 2008 gives details of the situation in Malta.
- b. In the majority of cases labour is induced for no plausible reason. Medicalization of labour carries a great incidence of operative delivery consequently increasing morbidity. Thus the process of birth becomes unnecessarily labour intensive with increased cost on the tight health budget which can be used more efficiently.
- c. The above along with the lack of informed consent is disempowering women, they are made to feel that they do not have an option in the management of their labour.

### **NCW recommendations**

- a. That pregnancy be treated as a normal physiological process unless there is an underlying medical problem.
- b. That the health profession dedicate their time to the women with obstetric and/or medical problems.
- c. That midwives, **being licensed health care professionals** be allowed to practice the art of midwifery to its fullest, Autonomously in giving care to women with low risk pregnancies, antenatally, Intrapartum and postnatally.
- d. Midwifery Led Practice needs to be established in the local health care setting since this had proven to lessen unnecessary interventions during pregnancy and childbirth, improved health outcomes to mothers and babies \nd provide dramatic cost savings.

## **14b Increasing Initiation and Duration of Breastfeeding Rates**

### **Justifications**

- a) Breastfeeding has been widely acknowledged as the best means of giving infants a healthy start to life. The promotion, protection and support of breastfeeding are a public concern and a health priority. Low rates and early cessation of breastfeeding have important adverse health and social implications for women, children, the community and the environment, and will result in greater expenditure on national health care provision and increase inequalities in health.

- b) The breastfeeding initiation rates in Malta are still very low, especially when compared to the north European countries. In 1995, 45% of Maltese mothers were breastfeeding (exclusively or mixed feedings) at the time of discharge from St Luke's Hospital, this figure rose to 57% in 2008 (National Obstetric Information and Statistics, 1995-2007). Although these reports have suggested a slow initiation improvement in breastfeeding locally, these figures are still much lower than the targets set out in the National Breastfeeding Policy which calls for a 90% breastfeeding rate on discharge from hospital remaining as high as 80% at four months (Health Division Malta, 2000, pg11),
- c) The European Union, through its institutions: "emphasizes...the importance of nutrition as one of the key determinants of human health", "is concerned by the consequences of the increase in obesity and overweight...particularly among children and adolescents"; "considers that action on nutritional health must be given an adequate place in the future Community action programme on public health".
- d) Childhood obesity is a growing problem. Kries, et al (1999) demonstrated that babies who were exclusively breastfed for 3 to 5 months were shown to reduce the risk of being obese or overweight by 35%. Various studies show that babies who are exclusively breastfed for six months are less likely to become adults who are overweight, obese, hypertensive and suffer from elevated cholesterol (Owen, et al. 2002; Bergmann, 2003; Ip et al, 2007). Babies exposed to formula feeding early in life, may develop a series of immune responses leading to Type I diabetes mellitus (Villalpando & Hamosh, 1998). Thus investing in breastfeeding at the start of life will save money on treatment reducing premature deaths and permanent disabilities from strokes.
- e) Exclusive breastfeeding protects the infant against a number of childhood illnesses. Studies have shown that working mothers, who were or are still breastfeeding, are less absent from work because the babies are less ill (Cohen et al. 1995).
- f) The increasing needs for a woman to return to work is currently causing women to stop breastfeeding because of the lack of facilities or support at the workplace.

### **Recommendations**

In light of the World Health Organization recommendation of exclusive breastfeeding for 6 months, women should have adequate maternity leave and provision of baby-friendly work places. Facilities should be available to help working women to meet their infant feeding goals. James Grant, the late Executive Director of UNICEF, states:

"The promotion of breastfeeding must not be seen as an excuse to exclude women from the labour force. The burden should no longer fall on women to choose between breastfeeding and work. The burden is on society to facilitate breastfeeding and indeed child care".

Therefore, breastfeeding women need support from the family, from the Health Care System, and require public health policies together with social policies and culture. This can be achieved through the following recommendations:

- a) Ensure adequate paid maternity leave. Ensure maternity protection provisions to women who are not currently entitled to these: e.g. women with short term contracts, casual and part-time workers, students.
- b) Truly offer flexible work hours to breastfeeding women, part-time schedules, job sharing, tele-work options.
- c) Work places become baby-friendly by providing the necessary basic facilities for nursing mothers. In this, the state is to act as a role model for the private sector. A clean, private and safe area is provided for the expressing and storing of breast milk.
- d) Breastfeeding women need to be allowed breastfeeding/lactation breaks.

- e) Breastfeeding women are not discriminated in any way, ensuring job security and employment protection.
- f) The right of women to breastfeed must be protected.
- g) Provision of infant/child care centres.
- h) The development and enforcement of legislation to ensure legislative support and protection are in place to enable working mothers to exclusively breastfeed their infants for 6 months and to continue thereafter.

## **15. Integrating Young People in Society and Working Life**

### **Employment**

#### **NCW Recommendations**

**It is crucial that studies are carried out by NSO to identify the different needs of young people from a gender perspective.**

**The introduction of new schemes to address youth unemployment should be carefully monitored to ensure their effectiveness**

**There is the need for genuine cooperation and coordination with all stakeholders, Local Councils, social partners and civil society who are providing education and vocational training services**

- more effective initiatives for the reduction of youth unemployment – in line with EU 2020 targets
- more effective measures to reduce the number of early school leavers, increase access to initial vocational, secondary and higher education including apprenticeships and entrepreneurship training for both young men and women
- speed up the development of frameworks to support the transparency of qualifications, their effective recognition and their validation of non-formal and informal learning
- to devise schemes for knowledge transfer so that older workers' skills and wide experience over many years can be passed on in such a way that younger people are happy to take "old" knowledge on board and make it a part of their "new" body of knowledge, both for their own benefit and the benefit of their company
- to improve measures to promote the social inclusion of young people, in particular to combat the problem of young people who are not in education, training, employment or registered as unemployed
- set targets to reduce the gender gap as regards vocational and technological training and wage differences at the time of recruitment
- further promote the importance of foreign language competence in improving education and employment opportunities as well as mobility of young people
- foster young entrepreneurship, in particular among women, by providing financial and technical support and providing the necessary measures for these initiatives.

### **Active Participation of Young People in Society**

#### **NCW Recommendations**

- the recognition of youth work activities including their contribution to voluntary work in a wide range of areas at different levels, that also make it possible for social welfare services to make them less costly
- that greater consideration is given to young people in disadvantaged situations who do not have access to high quality education, leisure facilities and access to information especially regarding opportunities and the different obstacles faced by young men and women.
- that the MCESD to become more involved in order to make it easier for young people to participate in national consultation procedures and to exchange best practices regarding the role of young people within their organisations

- Government to strengthen consultation structures with young people and their organisations on policies that affect them

### **An employability programme for early school leavers**

Very often early school leavers who come from unstable socio-economic environments have illiteracy problems, a history of absenteeism and in many cases challenging behaviour. There is the need for NSO studies to identify the causes and impact on early school leavers from a gender perspective

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

## **16. Pensions Reform**

NCW believes that policies in seeking solutions for sustainable pension systems for both men and women should **give equal importance to both demographics and active labour market policies** There can be no effective economic, sustainable medium to long term results without a strong social element in any pension system reform policy

- NCW believes that **automatic adjustment mechanisms for retirement age (a)** based either on longer life expectancy or demographic change are dangerous for society as a whole. Projections on demographics should be analysed to ensure adequate and timely adjustments of pension systems.
- Such projections must be used with care, as it is hard to predict in the long term<sup>15</sup>. Raising the legal retirement age on its own can result in pushing the elderly and particularly women below the poverty line.
- Problems such as intensity of work, health problems and early dismissal may be counter productive
- Adequacy and sustainability of pensions should be considered as a priority both from a **macroeconomic and a social perspective**. This is a vital issue for the economy, and so the competent authorities should **consider looking for sources of funding or ways of complementing it, other than levies on salaries, to help financing the pension systems.**
- Calculations of poverty risk for pensioners' households based on the general Eurostat method fail to shed sufficient light on pensioners' exposure to poverty, given the different income and expenditure structure of these households.
- A better method for estimating pensioners' exposure to poverty should be developed. It could also monitor the adequacy of retirement income, taking into consideration the different situations of each household member. More statistical estimates should be carried out to

evaluate the adequacy of pensions in the light of their ability to prevent poverty in old age and to ensure decent living standards for pensioners, allowing participation in public, social and cultural life<sup>16</sup>.

## 17. Active Labour Market Policies

Further to NCW recommendations proposed above, NCW proposals highlights the urgent need to increase diverse active labour market policies in an integrated approach

### NCW recommendations

- Parallel initiatives should be embedded in a strong active labour market policy with government and strong social partners involvement and ETC, training and on-the-job training schemes.
- Lifelong Learning programmes making better use of partnerships with other stakeholders, including NGOs and Local Councils and the creation of new jobs for effective growth and productivity. The needs of the different age groups should be addressed with specific focus on youth unemployment (active labour market policies)
- **Reinvigorating active labour market policies:** active labour policies, vocational training, investments and innovation promote the creation of more and decent workplaces so stabilising the pay-as-you-go schemes existing in the Member States.
- These schemes are powerful "shock-absorbers" in times of crisis and should not be considered a burden on the public deficit.
- Increasing an effective retirement age needs to be supported by initiatives to foster extended working life with effective growth employment policies and a real active ageing policy in line with the EU2020 strategy and innovation policy as highlighted in the Europe Innovation Flagship.
- Extending employment is relevant to all the goals of the Europe 2020 strategy. The social partners must be included in the initiatives oriented towards increasing the employment rate to 75% of the active population for men and women. Measures for integrating young people in society and working life, particularly in employment and employability programmes for early school leavers need to be strengthened.
- The strengthening of a Digital Agenda policy and its implementation is highly relevant to the creation of job opportunities
- Current employability measures need to be monitored and evaluated and adjusted for better outcomes rather than numbers in targeted groups (Malta's employment rate target is 62.9% by 2020) (*Clarification is required on whether this target signifies 62.9% of men and 62.9% of women*) This target fall short of expectations of reaching the EU2020 of 75% employment rates

## 18. Partnership between Business and Educational Establishments

### NCW proposals and comments

**The knowledge triangle (education, research, innovation) should be further promoted:** Malta needs to strengthen its potential in terms of skilled workers, science, research and technology and thus its capacity to innovate as a key element of competition. Initiatives by the Commission linked with *Future Skills for Future Jobs* and establishing Sector Councils on Employment need to be further developed. The notion of innovation has to be widened to include also "social innovation" in order to increase social capital which is important both for competitiveness and social cohesion. Introducing workplace innovation through Structural Funds should also be undertaken

There is the need to strengthen relations between employers and education establishments at all levels (*Innovation flagship*)

The following aspects need to be taken into account

- **the current financial crisis**, which is exposing Europe to new external and internal challenges and which in the real economy is taking the form of business closures, restructuring and a steep rise in unemployment;
- the arrival of **emerging economic powers** to compete with on global markets, and
- the development of **new technologies** that require constant adjustment and planning to ensure the availability of new skills to meet future needs;
- **the needs of people and groups at risk of exclusion**. Vulnerable groups are the most at risk in a period of recession. Partnerships must promote fairness by developing projects that help get women, young people, minorities, people with disabilities and older people into work

#### **Priorities:**

- a culture of partnership, with respect for the different roles of businesses and education establishments;
- a general overview of current relations and partnerships between education establishments and businesses, of which – outside the field of technical and vocational education – to address attitudes that serve as obstacles to effective partnerships
- the need for all initiatives to strike the right balance between top-down and bottom-up approaches;
- the need to pursue a three-level approach to all issues relating to partnership in the broad sense, between education establishments (universities, vocational training centres, schools, etc.) and employers (private sector, public sector, NGOs, etc.): primary, secondary and tertiary education, basic and continuing vocational training
- training in the fields of engineering, technology, innovation and research., and special efforts are needed to support professional sectors and increasing the participation of women and SMEs as, thanks to their flexibility, such businesses are the main engine of job creation in a recession and play a particular role in developing entrepreneurship and creativity;
- the role of employers' organisations, trade unions and civil society organisations in facilitating projects and unlocking synergies to support initiatives and dynamic, sustainable structures.

#### **Promoting cooperation between all stakeholders**

**Encouraging businesses and education establishments to become involved** in such partnerships through innovative input as to both form and content;

- organising **exchanges of best practice** and formulating technical and financial guidelines enabling initiatives to be tested, evaluated and disseminated at European level;
- **developing joint projects** (joint reference systems for degrees, networks of schools and initiatives, teacher training, network of mediators);
- further promoting **cross-mobility programmes involving teachers, pupils, schools and employers' organisations** funded up till 2013 by the European Structural Funds and under existing programmes (Leonardo, Grundtvig, Erasmus for students, apprentices and entrepreneurs, etc.),

## **19. Better integration of the NRP in the EU 2020 Strategy**

#### **NCW recommendations**

- Measures to enhance the quantity and quality and the creation of new jobs are not fully exploited in the document
- It is important that the NRP is owned by all stakeholders: government, employers, trade unions and Civil Society, including NGOs with the aim of reaching consensus

- New or specific targets should be set within the framework of the integrated guidelines, especially in areas where there has been limited progress in the Lisbon Strategy including in gender equality

There is the need for structural reforms to be implemented in a coordinated and consistent way through:

- Strengthening the focus on growth by creating a proper economic policy framework
- Improving the functioning of the internal market by striking a better balance between the economic, social and environmental dimension
- Promoting social cohesion as a factor in a stable and dynamic economy to boost growth and productivity.
- The EU 2020 strategy must be geared towards social progress, the consolidation and **sustainability of social protection systems and combating poverty**, not least by preventing unequal distribution of wealth, thus creating an inclusive labour market:
- **Flexicurity must provide effective security in changing circumstances:** The concept of flexicurity must ensure effective security in changing circumstances, with equal priority in practice for labour market security, stable employment and jobs, maintaining employability, social security, and labour market mobility geared towards good, productive jobs
- **Better coordination of tax policy:** In line with the EU Treaties, greater efforts should be made to achieve EU-wide coordination of Member States' tax policy (including harmonised tax bases and minimum rates), primarily in those areas in which the tax basis is internationally mobile and the risk of tax evasion and tax competition between Member States is greatest.
- Special emphasis should be placed on further **developing industrial policy**, not least in the direction of "green technologies", nanotechnology and ICT, and on boosting socially responsible entrepreneurship, as well as on promoting business start-ups and enabling companies to stay in business
- On the lines adopted by MEUSAC, further steps should be taken to foster ongoing civil dialogue based on the consultative procedures of the social partners within the MCESD. This dialogue should also bring in other civil society stakeholders (NGOs, social economy organisations, etc.) and representatives of higher education institutions and think tanks.
- **Monitoring the EU 2020 goals via MCESD: Working towards reaching consensus among social partners and creating the necessary reforms within the MCESD to ensure consultation with civil society organisations** are strengthened based on the respective consultative procedures and competences of the social partners
- Diverse measures to deal with irregular employment turning undeclared, irregular and precarious work into regular work.
- Careful consideration needs to be given to migration flows to and from countries of origin, future circular migration development that might be necessary as a result of demographic change in countries of origin. ( India and China are currently experiencing the return of nationals to their host countries)

## 20. Consolidating the external dimension:

In view of the rise of new global economic powers and the impact of the international economic crisis, it is more important than ever that Malta plays a leading role in the EU to ensure a new, more unified and assertive framework for the EU external activities, in order to secure an adequate, fair and sustainable opening of markets, raise the normative standards on the basis of the relevant rights involved, foster multilateralism and dialogue with key partners, and create a mutually beneficial area of progress that also includes the Mediterranean region and Africa

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