



**Founded 1964**

# **NCW-Mara**

**Newsletter of the National Council of Women - Malta**



***Doris Bingley, Diana Atungire-Ocaya and Diane Xuereb during the Commonwealth Foundation Consultation in Cyprus***

***Dr Carmelo Aquilina with the Executive Committee***



***Madi Sharma, Grace Attard and Dr Peter Agius during the Public Dialogue Women on Board Yes but How***

***Mary Gaerty, Doris Bingley, Marie Demicoli with Catherine MacKenzie***



***Members and friends during the NCW Sixties Night Party***

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**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  
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Founded 1964

# IL-Mara

**NEWSLETTER OF THE NATIONAL COUNCIL OF WOMEN - MALTA**

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## EDITORIAL

Dear Members and friends

The end of summer brings with it a synergy of activities which NCW is eager to organise for its members and the general public. The Public Dialogue entitled, "Women on Board Yes but How?" was remarkable with very active participation from those present. Madi Sharma, who delivered the keynote speech wrote many opinions for the European Economic and Social Committee on issues surrounding women and is an international speaker and freelance journalist on the subject. She is an entrepreneur with private sector businesses and NGOs in different parts of the world. A full report is published in the middle pages.

The sterling work of members of the executive committee is also given recognition on an international level, for this we have to congratulate Grace Attard as she was nominated by The European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) as a relevant stakeholder in the field of gender equality.

The newsletter is our voice on issues that are currently being discussed at European level and we hope that our members find this enlightening and interesting.

During the month of October, the premises is bubbling with activities especially through our educational initiatives, we also have invited two foreign speakers coming from Australia and Canada respectively. Dr Carmelo Aquilina who has delivered a lecture on Keeping your Brain Healthy and Kathryn MacKenzie who has showed us how to deliver speeches that would leave others speechless. All this and many more activities can be viewed in this issue.

Being the last issue for the year 2013, we wish our readers and their family a Holy and Happy Christmas and a Healthy and Prosperous New Year 2014.

**NCW Editorial Board**

**Members and friends had an enjoyable evening on Friday  
23rd August at the residence of President Mary Gaerty.**



**Grace Attard NCW  
1st Vice President**

## Congratulations

The European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) identified Grace Attard as a relevant stakeholder in the field of Gender Equality.



## President's Message



Dear Colleagues and friends,

Summer is officially over although the heat persists, hopefully it was a relaxing one for you, but I cannot say it was the same for me. With the wedding of one of our daughters and receiving foreign guests and work, I wished I had the energy of a twenty five year old, but the wisdom of my age!

In the recent days, NCW has been promoting the Initiative – One of us, an initiative, under the European Citizens Initiative, an instrument of participative democracy whereby citizens invite the

European Commission to legislate where it has power to do so, through the collection of a minimum of one million signatures from all member states. "One of Us" asks the EU to end the financing of activities which presuppose the destruction of human embryos, in particular in the areas of research, development aid and public health, in the belief that the embryo is indeed one of us. I urge you therefore to sign this initiative either online or on the signature sheets available in many churches.

Many a time I receive invitations from foreign journalists or representatives of organisations of different countries, to talk about women in Malta. The most recent one was a young woman from Finland asking 'who is the Maltese woman'. Who is the Maltese woman? She is a vibrant person with strong family values and a hard worker wanting to always better her status. In a recent and extremely well attended seminar organised by NCW and the European Parliament Office, it was evident that women mean to rise to decision making positions, but hurdles of

various heights must be overcome, some of which are cultural. Women have progressed in recent years and with a little support they will arrive in top places.

Speaking about education, the NCW Centre never fails to attract a large number of people, mostly women who wish to educate themselves for various reasons, including that of finding work. Girls and women are vulnerable when they lack financial independence and are prey to unscrupulous beings who thrive on their vulnerability. Although the number of women attending higher education is increasing in Malta, there are still a number of women, and men, who are illiterate. I believe in the Chinese saying of – give a man (woman) a fish and feed him for a day, teach a man how to fish and feed him for a lifetime- because one of the basic needs of a person is to be literate. We do hear success stories of illiterate persons who still reaped success, but what they have missed along the way, nobody knows! Lack of education must be eradicated, as it is the root of many hardships and we must all feel responsible towards those who may seek our help.

Next year will be a fantastic year for NCW, celebrating its 50th Anniversary. The Council has already started brainstorming as to how to best present the work it has done throughout these years and to celebrate its achievements. One of the themes will be women throughout these last 50 years. I would like all of you who have photos, news, anything relating to women, to please lend them to the Council. You would be contributing to a Council who has worked with you throughout these years, to better the lives of women. I thank you in advance for your support.

Till we meet again.

**Mary Gaerty**  
President

## Appreciation



**Laura Marguerat**

We are deeply saddened by Laura's passing away. Laura was more than just a friend to us all; she was an amazing person, gentle, kind and considerate. We always welcomed seeing her at every opportunity. Her passing away will not only leave a void in our lives but in the hearts of everyone who knew her. Her memory will always remain deep in our hearts.

Laura was a highly valued and respected Council member. During her many years as an active member

her dedication and selfless nature was always something that many others could only hope to attain. All who knew her regarded her with great respect and admiration. Laura helped the Council move forward in great strides and her efforts and contributions will never be forgotten.

It was a joy to have Laura around and we will all greatly miss her. To me she was a colleague, a travelling companion and a priceless friend. Laura, I will forever cherish the times we had together.

Marlene Calleja



**HELEN MUSCAT**

The National Council of Women is deeply saddened at the demise of Action for Breast Cancer Foundation President Helen Muscat. Mrs Muscat has greatly contributed towards the Maltese Society. She was a founder member of Malta Hospice

Movement and Breast Cancer Foundation. Both organisations are affiliated to the National Council of Women. She was an inspiration to many and definitely a role model towards the sterling work of a caring society. Malta has lost a champion in healthcare campaigning and support to patients. The President Mary Gaerty, the Executive Committee and Members of the National Council of Women would like to send their heartfelt condolence to her family.

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## Go Somewhere Over The Rainbow.....as an Effective Presenter! An interactive workshop by Kathryn Mackenzie M.Ed.



**Kathryn Mackenzie**

**K**athryn Mackenzie is an award-winning professional speaker, certified world-class speaking coach and holds a Masters in Education. She has enjoyed a former eclectic professional background as a teacher, college professor teaching 'Speaking with Confidence' courses,

education consultant and part-time stage actress.

In 2003, Kathryn joined Toastmasters International, discovered a passion for speaking and began her journey as a professional speaker by studying with world class speakers. Kathryn is now a published

author of: "Speeches That Will Leave Them Speechless." She has also co-created a CD titled "Panic to Power" with three public speaking world champions.

As a member of the Canadian Association of Professional Speakers, she enjoys 'educating' large groups in her keynote speeches, seminars and workshops, and also facilitating growth in others through individual coaching in Canada, the US and now, Europe. Kathryn delivers personal and professional poignancy in an entertaining, enlightening, energetic manner.

Kathryn Mackenzie conducted a very informative interactive workshop on Friday 11th October 2013 to an enthusiastic packed hall. Her methodology of dynamic presentations that keep the audience focused, captivating and inspiring is indeed impressive and enlightening. During

the workshop she instilled a feeling that anyone can implement such techniques. Her publications are of great reference to help anyone to deliver an effective speech or to market a product.

Marie Demicoli

Co-ordinator Environment Committee



**Kathryn Mackenzie during the Interactive workshop**

## Djalogu – Is-sena Ewropeja taċ-Ċittadini 2013



**B**'rabta mas-Sena Ewropeja taċ-Ċittadini 2013, li tagħha l-MEUSAC huwa l-kordinatur nazzjonali. Serje ta' djalogi pubbliċi gew imtella bl-iskop li l-pubbliku mhux biss isir jaf aktar dwar l-istituzzjonijiet ewropej izda wkoll biex jippartecipa billi jressaq il-veduti tiegħu. Għallhekk, giet organizzata attività li tikkonsisti fi djalogu taċ-ċittadini bit-tema, 'Ewropa bla Fruntieri' u li saret fil-pjazza ta' Bugibba nhar il-gimgha 13 ta' Settembru bejn it-20.00 u d-21.00.

Mistiedna għalhekk dan id-djalogu kienu l-Onorevoli Joe Cuschieri, MEP u Grace Attard, membru tal-Kumitat Ekonomiku u Soċjali Ewropew (EESC). Id-diskussjoni kient immexxija minn Norma Saliba, PBS

Mistoqsija x'inhu r-rwol tal-EESC, Grace Attard spjegat kif dan il-Kumitat Ewropew igib flimkien tliet setturi: rappreżentanti tal-haddiema, rappreżentanti ta' min ihaddem u rappreżentanti tas-Socjeta' Civili, jigiifieri l-ghaqdiet mhux governattivi (NGOs). Dawn jinkludu oqsma differenti li jirrappreżentaw fost oħrajn organizzazzjonijiet taz-zghazagh, tan-nisa, anzjani, pensjonanti, persuni b'dizabbilita', bdiewa, kumpaniji zghar u

medja, professjonisti, il-konsumatur u oħrajn.

Dawn it-tliet setturi jahdmu flimkien fuq l-istess livell. Ix-xogħol principali tagħom hu li flimkien ma rappreżentanti tal-pajjiżi kollha ta' l-Unjoni Ewropeja jagħmlu rakkomandazzjonijiet fuq diversi temi lill-Kummissjoni Ewropeja kif ukoll lill-Parlament u lill-Kunsill Ewropew. Il-fatt li dawn it-tliet setturi jaslu għal ftehim fid-decizjonijiet u r-rakkomandazzjonijiet tagħom (consensus) huwa ta' importanza kbira għall-Kummissjoni kif ukoll għall-Kunsill u għall-Parlament għaliex barra milli jkollhom il-proposti ta' esperti f'oqsma differenti, għandhom ukoll il-qbil dwar xejriet importanti li se jgħinjom ikinu f'sitwazzjoni aktar infurmata meta jigu għall-legizlazzjoni fil-Parlament

Min-naha tiegħu, l-Onorevoli Joe Cuschieri spjega kid jahdmu l-istituzzjonijiet Ewropej, jigiifieri Il-Kummissjoni, il-Parlament, li kif nafu hu l-uniku istituzzjoni li l-membri tagħha huma eletti mill-poplu u l-Kunsill Ewropew;

Tqajjmu diversi kummenti fuq ir-rata għolja ta' zghazagh fl-Ewropa, li huma bla xogħol, jew li waqfu jistudjaw; Issemmev

diversi programmi ewropej li qed jipprovdu tahrig biex dan jigi indirizzat, fosthom programme bhal Youth in Action, NEETS, Youth Guarantee kif ukoll diversi inizzjattivi li qed jittiehdu bhal pre ezempju Tahrig Vokazzjonli (MCAST), tahrig fuq il-post tax-xogħol u oħrajn

F'Malta, għal dawn l-aħhar snins qed issir ukoll revizzjoni fis-sistema edukattiva biex il-korsijiet offriti, inkluzi daww vokazzjonali jservu biex jimlew oqsma fil-postijiet tax-xogħol fejn għad m'għandniex bizzejjed nies ikkwalifikati għalihom, bhal Xjenza, Teknologija ta' l-Informatika u Matematika u li huma iwasslu għall-postijiet tax-xogħol tal-futur, mhux biss biex ikollna aktar nies fl-impjieg, imma wkoll biex ikollna aktar tkabbir ekonomiku ;

Temi oħra li gew diskussi kienu l-immigrazzjoni irregolari, li bhalissa tnejn mill-membri Maltin fl-EESC qed jahdmu fuq dokument kif il-pajjiżi kollha ta' l-Ewropa jistgħu jagħtu s-sehem tagħhom, ix-xogħol prekarju, il-Budget Nazzjonali, haddiema barranin, il-manifattura u l-faqar, kollha temi importanti għal pajjiżna. Importanti wkoll li nuzaw bl-aħjar mod possibbli il-Fondi Strutturali Ewropej biex dawn il-problemi jigu indirizzati bl-aħjar mod possibbli għal gid ta' Malta.





## The Challenges of Gender Imbalance on Corporate Boards in EU Member States



Addressing the challenges of gender imbalance on company boards is a matter of importance for all Member States, not least for Malta.

The first steps were taken on 1 March 2011 by Viviane Reding, Vice-President of the European Commission responsible for Justice, Fundamental Rights and Citizenship, with the launch of the voluntary Women on Board Pledge for Europe - a call for publicly listed companies in Europe calling for all stakeholders to sign a voluntary commitment on an increase of 30% by 2015 and 40% by 2020. This was followed by the strong support from the European Parliament in July 2011.

Why the need for more women on boards?

A number of reasons were put forward: an untapped potential of skilled human resources; the contribution of women to economic growth and reaching the 75% 2020 Strategy targets and last but not least barriers women still face on the way to the top.

Research findings reveal that companies with more women on their boards were found to outperform their rivals with a 42% higher return. A gender balanced board is more likely to pay attention to managing and controlling risk combined with strong organisational and financial performance.

It is worth noting that a number of initiatives (through self-regulation) to address gender imbalance were taken by national governments, EU social partners, individual businesses and other stakeholders. These include legislative measures such as quotas with or without sanctions, and voluntary initiatives, such as corporate governance codes, charters, training, mentoring and databases promoting female candidates.

However, between 2003 and January 2012, the share of women on boards rose slightly from 8.5% to 13.7% - that is 5% in a little over 8 years. Following this poor performance, the Commission Work Programme for 2012 announced the 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 exchanges and related measures COM(2012) 614 final - 2012/0299(COD))

### **The directive in a nutshell**

The proposed directive makes provisions for a 40% target for non-executive directors, excluding SMEs with rules setting a transparent selection process, based on qualifications and merit and with a preference rule only in cases of equal qualifications.

It also provides for flexibility and subsidiarity for Member States, that have in place effective measures before the coming into force of the directive, with possible exemption for companies where the under-represented sex makes up less than 10% of the workforce. The directive is of a temporary nature - sunset clause in 2028.

How is all this going to affect the Maltese stakeholders, women themselves and the economic growth of the country? Are government and the business sector ready to come up with self-regulation measures and voluntary transparent mechanisms?

A public dialogue was organised by the National Council of Women in collaboration with The European Parliament Information Office in Malta was held on Friday 13 September 2013 at 9.30am at Ewropa House, St Paul Street, Valletta. The aim of the public dialogue was to discuss the proposed directive and to reach consensus by all stakeholders in addressing the Maltese situation, before the end of 2013 which is the target for the adoption of the proposed Directive.

Full report available from NCW on request

**Grace Attard, Vice-President NCW,  
Member of the EESC**

## Best Wishes to NCW Past President Helga Ellul

It is indeed an honour for the National Council of Women that members of the organisation decide to actively participate in the country's leading decision-making posts at National and EU level. We take this opportunity to send our best wishes to NCW past president Helga Ellul, who decided to offer her years of expertise by contesting the forthcoming European Parliament Elections.

Helga Ellul has contributed for many years towards our country's economy. She has been a role model for many women who aspired to leadership positions. As President of NCW, Helga Ellul

contributed to development of women in Malta, as she always believed in women's capabilities and their potential. She was instrumental in developing our Council into an educational hub for women returnees and worked hard for social inclusion at all levels.

We are sure that like all the other female candidates for the European Parliament Elections she will work toward the future economic development of our country while ensuring the gender dimension in all areas. In our next issue we will dedicate a full feature of all MEP female candidates to our readers.



**Helga Ellul**



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## ORGANISATIONAL BENEFITS OF WOMEN IN MANAGEMENT



**NCW President Mary Gaerty during the Public Dialogue Women on Board**

**H**ow can it be easier to have more women on Boards? What benefits are gained by organisations when women join a board? One of the first solutions that is discussed is to have more family friendly measures, but although these are important and a positive measure for making it possible for women to contribute to the labour market, they are not sufficient. Women need the support of their families, their partners or husband and that of other women who believe in their capabilities, in order to achieve the posts of decision making.

Why is it that women lag behind, is it perhaps that they as girls have been read too many fairytale stories such as Cinderella and Snow White, and without knowing it we were imparting the message that girls are weak and cannot take a decision but need a man to rescue them and decide for them, much unlike the modern fairytales such as Brave where the young woman decides her own future, becoming the protagonist of the story. That women must be empowered through education and through gaining of skills in order to be able to be financially independent and have a high esteem of themselves, is a known fact and it is through this that they will avoid poverty.

Women today form 60% of the university population and this gives a woman a background of thought, problem solving, discipline in her work and lifelong connections if she manages to nurture these connections throughout her life. Many men are chosen as board members through

acquaintances that may date back to their school or university years. Women tend to lose these contacts due to lack of time and other commitments, neglecting a very important aspect, that of being 'known' and therefore a possible candidate for a seat on the board. Having a university degree does not automatically qualify a person as a board member, but leadership qualities, knowledge of the subject and experiences on smaller boards will be definitely appreciated and welcomed on a board. More women need to be presented as role models and showcased for their abilities and their success in life, as this will inspire other women and help them to believe more in themselves.

Most of the Maltese Small and Medium Sized (SMEs) are family businesses, with the father generally the head of the company. How many businesses do we find, and perhaps this is also changing, where the company name reads 'ABC and Sons Ltd' and the girls, the females of that family? Well they can be secretaries and assistants but not decision makers!! So it is not only a question of either education or skills or family friendly measures but also a question of culture. Culture is at times much more difficult to change than anything else, as it is embedded in the minds and way of life of the person.

It has been established that companies that had women presence on their boards have fared better in the financial crisis than those boards with no women occupying a board seat and this makes sense when one is faced

with the fact that around 50% of the population is female and that they are also 80% of all consumers, on not only low cost items, but also on high priced goods

The European Commission's database on women and men in decision making as at October 2012, reveals that in publicly listed companies in Malta which amount to 10, there were 6.8% of executive directors in Malta as against the EU average of 10.2% whereas that of female non executive directors was 3.5% as against the EU average of 16.8%. A board member sitting on more than one decision making body is counted only once. Looking at this picture the present seems very bleak indeed, but in reality must we put so much effort to have the required gender balance in these 10 companies only? We understand that these are the publicly listed companies, but should we restrict the effort to just 10 companies or include also SMEs. Women should not be token members as this solution is not beneficial either to the board or to women themselves. Companies themselves should mentor women so that there will always be availability of 'board ready women'. It is not enough that the posts on board are filled with the sufficient number, but we must ensure that the number of women who will succeed the ones on board is also available. In view of the new Directive enforcing listed companies to have a minimum of 40% of women board members, it is better that companies seek to comply voluntarily rather than having a directive impose such a demand.

Action is what is required. That businesses benefit through having women on board and in management and leadership roles has been proven and debated, but it must now be believed and acted upon. This will require a significant shift in corporate culture and in the attitudes and behaviours of many who occupy positions of power. Change is occurring, but it is slow and the many talented, qualified and experienced women seeking to serve on boards are getting tired.

**Mary Gaerty NCW President**



## Gender Balance on Company Boards: It is about the economic, social and political benefits



**W**omen in decision making positions, flexible work arrangements, the way company boards operate, the gender pay gap, and the need to tackle myths about men and women and stop stereotyping were a few of the subjects that featured in a public dialogue entitled 'Women on Boards. Yes, but how?' held at Europe House in Valletta this morning.

The event was organised by the European Parliament Information Office in Malta in collaboration with the National Council of Women.

The European Parliament is currently discussing a Commission proposal aimed at improving gender balance on the boards of publicly listed companies. With a ratio of one woman in every 20 top management positions in Malta, the subject of gender balance is particularly relevant. All too often the debate on gender balance is limited to quotas. The public dialogue was intended to serve as a means of examining the challenges and possible solutions beyond the issue of quotas.

MEP Marlene Mizzi (S&D), who participated in one of the two panel debates during the event, said that because she highly believes in women's capabilities, she tends to shy away from artificial impositions. She said she is in favour of part of the proposed directive regarding gender balance on company boards, but explained that she has not decided how she will vote, because the European Parliament has not yet been presented with the final report on the matter.

Madi Sharma, an entrepreneur who has written many opinions for the European Economic and Social Committee on issues surrounding women, gave the keynote speech at the event, saying that the issue of gender balance on company boards is not a question of gender, quotas or tokenism, but it is all about the economic, social and political benefits.

She quoted statistics by Credit Suisse and KPMG which show that a higher participation of women in business leads to higher profits, more investment in human resources and a more

long-term strategy. All the data pleads for the inclusion of women in top management, simply because it is in the best interest of business.

Mrs Sharma stressed: "It is about having complete transparency in the head-hunting process of non-executive directors; it is about choosing the most competent person for the job, be it a woman or a man. And which company would not want to go for the most competent person?"

National Council of Women president Mary Gaerty mentioned family friendly measures, saying, "We always seem to imply that these are intended for women only. What is really needed is a culture change." She referred to fairy tales in which girls are portrayed as helpless and in need of a knight in shining armour to save them. "Instead, our young girls need to believe in their strength and their capabilities, just like Princess Merida in the animated film Brave."

Mariella Scicluna, from the Malta Business Bureau (MBB), quoted a Eurobarometer study which revealed that 31% of respondents in Malta replied "don't know" when asked what they believed was the best way to achieve a more balanced representation of men and women on company boards.

Ms Scicluna explained that flexible work arrangements are excellent means by which

employees are given the opportunity to combine their professional and personal lives. They also create enhanced gender equality at the place of work. She said that in the EU, this proactive vision is seen to promote and encourage people to re-enter/remain into the labour force.

"This eventually results in an increase in production levels, birth rates and provides a stable financial security to families. The low birthrate can be bridged by encouraging more people to enter the labour market, particularly females, who are more inclined and socially induced to take up family responsibilities – the major reason which has led to the infamous gender gap between men and women."

She spoke about SHIFT (Supporting Human Resources in Family-Friendly Training), an MBB project that is co-funded by the European Commission through the Lifelong Learning, Leonardo Da Vinci Mobility (PLM) Programme. Through this project, the MBB is seeking to gather best practices from countries with an advanced human resources level, particularly in the field of family-friendly measures and flexible work arrangements to develop an innovative and more competitive labour force in Malta.

Several participants, including candidates for the May 2014 European elections Jonathan Shaw and Helga Ellul, took the floor in an exchange of views with panellists, discussing a number of elements, ranging from women's education, to the critical role of social networking when it comes to advancement to top positions.

The European Parliament is currently discussing the Commission proposal in the Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality and the Committee on Legal Affairs, and MEPs have submitted more than 300 amendments to the Commission proposal. The European Parliament is expected to vote on the proposal on 22 October.

The panellists who participated in the event's two panel debates were MEP Marlene Mizzi, Antoinette Caruana (Simonds Parsons Cisk), Joe Tanti (Malta Business Bureau), Carmen Sammut (university lecturer), Reuben Buttigieg (Malta Institute of Management), David Curmi (Chamber of Commerce), Grace Attard (European Economic and Social Committee/National Council of Women) and Charlotte Camilleri (MEA). The debate was moderated by Times of Malta journalist Kim Dalli.



# MEN AND WOMEN ON B



their success stories in SMEs

This was followed by reactions to challenging questions put by the animator to the first group of panelists. Ms Antoinette Caruana currently HR Manager at Simonds Fasons Cisk made a number of reflections on aspects of what she termed 'The Culture of Motherhood' which tended to exclude the role of fathers. In spite of this, over the last 15 years, Malta has seen an increase to 43% of women in the workforce, which however is still a long way from the 75% target for 2020! Leadership positions are often being over glamourised; they are positions of hard work and dedication and women and men, who have to make life choices and prioritise before taking any decisions. Successful role models are important to give a realistic view of what the post entails. As far as quotas are concerned, one must be careful that we do not go for numbers ignoring leadership skills, managerial and organisational skills among others, which are necessary for women and men who are to be appointed/elected to these posts

Malta Business Bureau,

Mr J.Tanti strongly emphasised the importance of education at all levels starting from the very young, to bring about a change towards more gender-balanced attitudes and respect for equality. There is a need for a shift in professional career guidance offering career choices that address the labour market needs, the need for flexibility to address family needs – to allow space for better work/life balance for both mothers and fathers who are committed to care for children and the elderly. Government should make better use of the European Structural Funds to address these issues

Malta Institute of Management (MIM) President, Mr Reuben Buttigieg, stated that anti-discrimination was the basic principle of the Institute. Like previous speakers he pointed out the importance of education – cultural change takes long!

**T**he challenge of gender balance on corporate boards in EU member states was addressed at a Public Dialogue organised by the National Council of Women in collaboration with the European Parliamentary Information Office, Europa House, Valletta on Friday 13 September 2013.

The event brought together a wide range of stakeholders that packed the hall including representatives of business, current and prospective MEPs, PN members of Parliament as well as young female entrepreneurs and representatives of women's NGOs

Dr Peter Agius welcomed the participants with a brief overview of the debate on the proposed directive for a 40% target of non-executive directors on the largest stock exchange listed companies and the steps taken so far to address the gender imbalance which since 2010 has gathered more momentum as a result of two key Commission initiatives: the voluntary signing of a Women on Board Pledge in 2011 which was welcomed by the EU Parliament, the Council of Ministers and social partners who committed themselves to take action. Regrettably little if anything was done by member states as revealed by the Eurobarometer where a mere 5% increase was registered between 2003 and 2012 that is in just over 8 years!

This therefore resulted in the second Commission initiative : a legislative proposal.

The first session, which was animated by journalist Kim Dalli from the Times of Malta introduced Malta Business Bureau researcher, Dr Mariella Scicluna who presented the findings of a study carried out on local businesses in order to gauge their perceptions on family-friendly measures at the workplace, and their impact on the company. The results (see MBB website for details) revealed strong positive positions in favour of more women on corporate boards, with however a possible negative impact including costs and lack of flexibility structures for both mothers and fathers. The research study also contained a number of examples of good practice that can be adopted at local level

NCW President, May Gaerty made a very interesting presentation in which she traced the cultural developments and changes over the past 30-40 years in Malta. She commented on school books and books for children way back and other means of 'entertainment' for young people that were heavily male dominated presenting young girls as submissive to and dependent on a dominant male. As manager and director of a business company herself, she gave detailed accounts of female entrepreneurs and





# BOARDS – YES BUT HOW?

He also spoke about the many benefits of flexibility measures which a company can provide versus costs. Women need to be more visible, to network more, to make more use of the social media and to lobby more. Today the Financial Services Sector is witnessing an increasingly high rate of female participation. Addressing the skills mismatch in particular in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) he said these should be opened up to encourage the participation of young women in their career choices as future jobs depend heavily on qualifications in these subjects.

Dr Carmen Sammut, Head of Fondazzjoni Ideja stated that change of culture is not enough. We are dealing with a long process where political and economic structures need to change. As Commissioner Vivian Reding stated 'change needs to come from the top'. The proposed directive is in fact a watered down version of the Commission's first draft.

The second session took off with a strong and vibrant delivery by key speaker Madi Sharma, a representative of the Employers Group in the European Economic and Social Committee, (EESC). She called for more men to be present in these debates as they have a key role to play, as we are not dealing simply with gender issues but with economic, social and political issues that affect all citizens; we should be talking about equity, values and democracy – the core elements of the European Union. The 'no blame' culture which is becoming more prevalent in society is no excuse. It is everybody's responsibility and we all have a role to play. Ms Sharma went through the different phases proposed by the directive. As far as recruiting is concerned, what makes a suitable leader is not just academic qualifications, but creativity, management and organisational skills and the ability to forge ahead – qualities that are essential for economic leadership. The directive makes provision for transparent, democratic, comparative criteria for the selection and recruiting process to be established, irrespective of gender and that therefore apply equally to both women and men. Only by setting up an independent recruiting committee can we guarantee that this is achieved.

The first speaker on the second panel was Dr David Curmi, President of the Malta Chamber of Commerce who referred to his vast experience in the business sector. While emphasising



the importance of education he spoke about educating the general public and access to lifelong learning. He stated that the potential of women that make up over 50% of the population cannot be ignored if we really want economic growth. Supportive of women in decision-making, he stated that the issue cannot be treated in a one-size-fits-all manner. Each business sector has its own specificities that need to be addressed individually and therefore in a more focused manner to reach consensus among all stakeholders and avoid negative consequences.

The next speaker, Dr Charlotte Grech gave her views on questions and comments from the floor. She stated that representing MEA, she was against the proposed directive, saying that it was not a matter of gender.

Responding to the question of the strength of shareholders' voting rights, in the election of an independent non-executive director, Grace Attard, EESC, NCW said that the directive does not interfere with how shareholders vote. However, the process of recruiting by an independent recruiting committee, and the subsequent list of the most suitable, will guide voters in their voting preferences, ensuring the election of those who are the most suitable for the post irrespective of whether they are women or men.

Focusing on the business community, Grace Attard asked how many companies in Malta had put in practice voluntary measures as proposed by the Women on Boards Pledge 2010. She also asked why there is so much resistance to the directive when the directive itself makes two types of proposals: legislative and

voluntary. The directive in fact, states that if voluntary initiatives are in place and are effective in reaching a 30% target, before the coming into force of the directive, member states need not be bound to take legislative measures. It is important to get the facts right about what the directive is proposing and to access the vast range of examples of good practice other countries are putting in place, the latest during the month of July. Self-regulation, Charters, training, mentoring, networking programmes can all be effective measures. There is a choice that can be taken, but doing nothing is not a choice. We should not wait for what are member states will decide, we should not tow the line! We should go ahead and take action.

Bringing the panel discussion to an end, MEP Marlene Mizzi gave her views on comments made by previous speaker. She also spoke about instances in her experience as MEP stating that the process of taking decisions has many phases, not least when it comes to voting for amendments; it is not simply a 'yes' or a 'no' as each step requires thought and judgment when taking decisions.

Comments and questions from the floor and sharing of personal experience added to the lively debate from different perspectives. Participants were actively engaged in the discussion. It was clear that there was an overall consensus that all stakeholders should strive to reach agreement on the best way forward not least in the interest of women and the economic development of Malta.

**Grace Attard, EESC, NCW**

## EQUINET High-Level Seminar on Gender Equality Gender Equality in the Labour Market. The role of Equality Bodies



**T**his High Level Seminar was held on 27 June 2013 in Brussels and is the first event dedicated to gender equality organised by Equinet following the incorporation of

the work of the former European Commission led Network of Gender Equality Bodies.

This Seminar is the first event organised by EQUINET, aimed at sharing with EU level stakeholders experiences and expertise coming from equality bodies work on the promotion of gender equality in particular relating to EU legislation and policies. It also aims to provide equality bodies with an overview and a platform for dialogue on EU development

The seminar was opened with a presentation by Prof. Francesca Bettio, ENGE - coordinator of the European Network of Experts on Gender Equality, The Impact of the Economic Crisis on the Situation of Women and Men and on Gender Equality Policies; This research study is a valuable tool to address the current and future situation of women in the labour market

Andreas Stein (Head of Unit, Equal Treatment Legislation, European Commission DG Justice) on Current legal and policy developments on gender equality. An overview of Legal and Political developments focused on Gender balance on company boards directive - which was received in contrasting ways by member states. The process of negotiation is still ongoing. In some countries there has been a voluntary improvement of measures, which is preferred to a binding regulatory measure, which is seen as a threat, although the increase in the participation rates of women is still very low. France is the only country which introduced quotas with an increase from 2% to 50%. There has been cross group support in the EP. However, there is the need for member States to regulate at National level. There has been a deadlock on the issue in Council

The following themes were also addressed:

- Equal Pay – the Gender Pay Gap which is currently being reviewed in line with the EU 2020 Strategy reconciliation of work and family life ( progress report to be issued soon on pre-school services) with special focus on Child Care and Care for the Elderly, financial disincentives and the pension system and decision making at all levels
- Violence Against Women (which was a priority under the Irish Presidency) a progress report will be issued soon on the

current situation This will include female genital mutilation and the protection of victims' rights with a focus on women victims of violence, which will also be covered in 2013

- Equal Pay for work of equal value - The Commission is to issue a set of guidelines on job classification

• Addressing equality in goods and services with special focus on insurance premiums, including mandatory public information. There is a possibility of publishing a set of guidance in this area also

- Monitoring on Self-Employed – the Maternity Leave Directive (which should have come into force at the end of 2012) – deadline has expired and infringement procedures will follow

• Mikael Gustafsson (Chair of the European Parliament's Women's Rights and Gender Equality Committee) on The European Parliament current work and key priorities on gender equality and the role for equality bodies; highlighted the fact that gender discrimination is in all spheres, but the biggest problems remain men's violence against women. However the focus will still be on women in the labour market which is considered a priority, in view of the current financial situation The presentation also highlighted the need for adequate funding for Equality Bodies (ESF) in order to ensure effective work, publishing reports and making recommendations.

With regards to work-life balance the presentation addressed also the unequal distribution of family responsibilities in the home, the impact on career choices (mothers are forced to make choices) and social exclusion. In a recent study 30% of women say they are inactive or work part-time due to family care responsibilities. There is the need for a renewed commitment towards economic independence for both men and women, addressing institutional barriers (as from next year) revising and implementing the Parental leave directive for both men and women

- The role of Equality Bodies: Themes addressed included

• Implementation of legislation

• Equal Pay - With regards to the parental leave directive Equality Bodies should ensure that spouses and life partners are recognised at law

- Occupational health and Safety and Social Security

• Parental Leave - Reference was made to the Social Partners Framework Agreement – March 2012 Proposals to include entitlement to men in part-time work (no-transferable); return after

- parental leave including to same work or an alternative work that is not less favourable

• Access to goods and services for Self-Employed. Reference as in Session 1 was also made to the recast Directive on Equal Pay and Equal Pay for Work of Equal Value and the Commission's proposal to issue guidelines on Job Classification and evaluation

- Multi discrimination grounds – the need for adequate evidence which is always very difficult to provide; however reference can be made to case law

• The question of temporary agents with regards to self-employed

- Training facilities for incoming new laws

Laurence Bond, (Head of Research and Development, Equality Authority in Ireland - Equinet Member) presented statistics on Pregnancy and parenthood related discrimination: challenges and possible roles for equality bodies. The presentation focused on a survey carried out in the UK on pregnancy and the return to work after pregnancy

5% were dismissed, or made redundant after pregnancy

30% had some form of unfair treatment during pregnancy

Only 1 in 200 get a decision and decisions relying on the legal process are taken depending on how seriously the case has been taken; The need for more enforcement and engaging employers in a healthy debate and proactive systems together with Public Policy are some of the most important elements

Maria Karageorgou (Senior Investigator at the Greek Ombudsman, Equinet Member) on Harassment and sexual harassment at work: challenges and possible roles for equality bodies)

- The presentation focused on Sexual Harassment at the workplace, which currently is not taken very seriously. Points raised included

• The increase of men being sexually harassed at the workplace

- The obligation for all companies to set up a policy in practice,

• The need for the policy to be disseminated

- The need for a person of trust to guide victims and to ensure the correct evidence is prepared

• The burden of proof and 'the presumption of discrimination' at law

- The need for an effective tool and adequate sanctions that act as a deterrent are in conflict

Presentations and related documents to be found on [www.equineteurope.org/activities/](http://www.equineteurope.org/activities/) events and also Facebook and Twitter

**Grace Attard NCW, EESC**



## The EESC features in the Youth in Action Programme in Malta

The Youth in Action Programme takes place every year in a different Member State. This year it was held in Malta in August with the theme 'Citizenship'. It involved an exchange of about 80 students from different Member States. The youths were given the opportunity to meet, listen and ask questions to different people who are working in important institutions in the EU, including MEPs, the EU Commission and the EESC, to help young people understand the democratic process at EU level. As representative of Civil Society, Grace Attard was invited to speak about the EESC.

The sessions took off with questions on What does European Citizenship mean to you?

Do you believe in a United Europe? Will you exercise your right to vote for European Elections? How does the EESC function in a democratic process? The lively discussion provided a mixture of ideas ranging from scepticism to strong support for a United Europe. However during the debate, there was a serious lack of awareness on how the EESC functions.

The discussion was followed by two workshops.

Workshop 1 Addressing Youth Unemployment

The first group of about 30 young people between 16 and 20 years old, formed groups of three, representing Employers, Trade unions and Varied Interests Groups to seek to reach agreement on this topic. (encouraging the spirit of consensus) based on the EESC structure.

Comments by the 'Employers representatives' were in favour of employing more young people so that they can gain experience; they would offer sponsorship programmes for young people in factories or enterprise. However you can lose them if they find a better job.

'Representatives of NGOs' stated that young people can gain experience from Youth Organisations, they are full of energy with new ideas and have more time to work in a company. Other students want to study a particular area in which they are interested but do not know how to find the right job related to their studies.

'Trade Union representatives' stated that education paths should ensure they offer traineeships that lead to jobs; too many young people are highly qualified but do not find a job. Countries should make farming more attractive through better education.

Workshop 2 Addressing employment of older workers

The second group also simulated a discussion based on the EESC structure on the theme 'Addressing the employment of persons over 50 years'. Some of the comments by 'Employers representatives' were quite varied ranging from a preference to choose younger workers between 20 and 30 as they are more creative and energetic to a choice of elderly persons as they are more committed, they are not lazy, they have more experience and are more responsible and can teach younger

workers, but they take longer to learn and their knowledge is 'old'.

'Trade Union representatives' focused more on social aspects such as they need to work to earn money to sustain the family and at the same contribute by paying taxes and they can be single parents.

'NGO representatives' focused more on rights such as there shouldn't be age discrimination.

A doctor should decide whether an employee should retire.

It was a really interesting experience and the participation and the engagement of the young people during the workshop sessions was fantastic in spite of the heat of the Maltese summer!



## Millennium Development Goals 2015



With the Millennium Development Goals now just over a year away from their 2015 deadline, the process of designing their successors is taking another important step forward in New York. Under the theme of The Post-2015 Development Agenda: Setting the Stage, delegates at this month's meeting of the U.N. General Assembly are looking at what the MDGs have achieved so far and discussing what comes next.

For almost a decade-and-a-half, the MDGs

have shaped the development agenda, built support for poverty reduction and set concrete goals for measuring progress. There have been impressive achievements: The goal of halving the number of people living in absolute poverty has already been met, and there has been progress in other areas, including reductions in mortality among mothers and the under-fives, improvements in school enrolment for both girls and boys, and a lowering in the rate of HIV infection. But, overall, much still needs to be done if the world is to meet all the MDGs.

What comes next? The MDGs expire in 2015, and a major effort is under way to design their successors, drawing in a wide range of voices – governments, development experts, civil society and many others.

As its contribution to the post-2015 process, the OECD has identified a number of elements for the future development agenda. Among them is a two-tiered approach whereby high-profile global goals are supplemented by national targets that better reflect each country's needs. The OECD also believes that development goals should embrace the full range of factors that determine well-being, including human rights, gender equality and sustainable development. And it believes that goals must be both meaningful and measurable, which underlines the importance of building statistical capacity in developing countries.

Statement about UN meeting on MDGs  
World Leaders Reaffirm Commitment to MDGs

In a formal declaration - called an "outcome document" - released Wednesday (25th September) world leaders meeting here (UN-NY) said with less than 850 days remaining for the achievement of the MDGs, "We renew our commitment to the Goals and resolve to intensify all efforts for their achievement by 2015."

These goals include the eradication of extreme poverty and hunger, the achievement of universal primary education, the promotion of gender equality, the reduction of child mortality, the improvement of maternal health, the elimination of HIV/Aids, malaria and other diseases and the protection of the global environment.

The heads of state and heads of government said they are concerned at the unevenness and gaps in achievement and at the immense challenges that remain.

"We are resolved that the post-2015 development agenda should reinforce the international community's commitment to poverty eradication and sustainable development," the document stated.

The world leaders also decided to launch a process of intergovernmental negotiations at the beginning of the 69th session of the General Assembly next September "which will lead to the adoption of the post-2015 development agenda."

**Doris Bingley Hon. General Secretary**

## Overview of Euromed Civil Forum Brussels 3-4 September 2013

### Gender Equality: outcomes and prospects of the Istanbul-Marrakech Process



**T**he contribution of Civil Society to the Euromed Ministerial Meeting Paris 11-12 September 2013

The Conference was organised by the Euro-Mediterranean Human Rights Network (EMHRN) the Euromed Non-governmental Platform (EMNGP) and the European Feminist Initiative (EFI)

The opening session strongly stated that the Paris Ministerial Meeting representing Women's Rights cannot be anything like the Marrakech Ministerial meeting, as the scenario is now completely different.. The key role of women in the democratic process must be recognised and addressed in the final declaration with commitment and conviction

On the 4 September 2013 a meeting and discussion with Mr Mangarelli, representing the High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and Vice-President of the European Commission, H.E. Catherine Ashton was held in preparation for the Ministerial Conference

Key points addressed included : Background events leading up to the current situation in Southern and Eastern Mediterranean; The emergence of extreme religious movements; The role of women in the revolution and demonstrations is not to ask for democracy simply on their own behalf but for all society; The Draft Constitution cancelled human rights and rights of minorities with more powers to the Muslim Brotherhood. Delay in action to be taken by EU, US etc was because the second revolution gave the Impression of a military coup

This was followed by testimonies from different countries in the region

**Palestine:** The Israeli occupation of Palestine and the subsequent violation of human rights including family rights, the right to housing, demolition of Palestinian houses by Israeli soldiers; violence and harassment of women, poverty, employment and economic rights. The situation of Palestinian refugees

in Lebanon, the desperate living conditions for women and their families, without any opportunity to employment or education of children and youth. Palestinians, particularly women have the fundamental right to return to their country (UN resolution 194)

**Syria:** Reference was made to the current situation in Syria and the threat of war. 2 million Syrian refugees in Lebanon including women and children; women have been subjected to traditional law. The reluctance of the International Community to support the opposition. Women are victims of all sorts of violence in and outside refugee camps. Women make up more than 50% of the demonstrators and are being subjected to all sorts of violence in public, which is against all human dignity. A strong message was sent to the European Union who as a major international player is well-positioned to put pressure.

**Tunisia:** Although there is an agreement between the EU and Tunisia (November 2012) for changes in legislation on women's rights, non-discrimination was not included in the redrafting of the Constitution and no implementation measures are in place. Violence, political killings, rape and Jihad are rampant. Association and Action plans with the EU should be compatible with the needs of society, including women's rights. Tunisia is in financial difficulty due to its debt burden

**Morocco:** Women's Movements have played a leading role regarding the Family Code and the Personal Status Law. The reforms include the lifting of a number of reservations to the UN Conventions and protocol. There is a majority of Muslims in Government and there are no political efforts to enforce Constitution, such as monitoring the situation although the Constitution recognises equality at all levels. Nothing is being done to address forced marriages and girl-child marriages currently for 14-15 year olds; children's rights are violated and there is no law to establish the age of 18 as the minimum age for marriage.

Other issues raised were domestic violence legislation has not been ratified in line with UN protocol or the CoE Convention (Istanbul Convention); land property, where the law favours men and women have no rights; no protection for pregnant women. It is important that any form of EU support is conditional to respect of human rights and women's rights according to international commitment.

**Libya:** Women's Associations need to look at the social and economic rights of women. There is the need for sector based Trade Unions to include the gender dimension. Addressing women's rights in education and health and sexual education and early marriages is crucial. Women who were in jail before the revolution need rehabilitation programmes to integrate in society and to seek employment. Harassed and sexually abused women are excluded from the family – dishonour to the family, while single mothers are excluded from housing rights. There are no measures to address the dire needs of widows and divorced women; the latter do not have custody rights.

Workshop Sessions discussed the following themes: Discrimination and the legal status of women; Discrimination and the social and economic Status of women; Violence against women

#### Concluding Session (Afternoon)

Intervention by Mr Mangarelli, representing H.E. Catherine Ashton, High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and Vice-President of the European Commission. In a very moving reaction, he paid tribute to women engaged in the democratisation process, admitting that now we are witnessing regression

Intervention by Stefan Fyule, European Commissioner for Enlargement and European neighbourhood Policy, which was more of a feedback to what he had been listening to

He explained in detail the role of the EU in Foreign Policy and the renewed Neighbourhood Policy to address the events leading to a democratisation process, urging Civil Society at the centre – partnership with the people - determination to continue to support Civil Society and the importance of Women's organisations to form partnerships with social partners, Employers Representatives and Trade Unions; already the European Economic and Social Committee, EESC have been working on this process and the Commission wants to develop this partnership further

#### Conclusion of Conference

Following the reading of the Recommendations, the final Declaration will be presented at and the Paris Ministerial Meeting to be included in the Final Paris Ministerial Document(11-12 September 2013) . (This however was not accepted in Paris Meeting. See report on the Paris Ministerial Meeting)



## Third Ministerial Meeting on Women's Rights in the Euromed Region - Paris - 11-12 September 2013



**European High Representative for Foreign Affairs H.E. Catherine Ashton (right) and French Minister for Gender Equality H.E. Ms Najat Vallaud-Belkacem (left) at the opening of the Paris Meeting**

The Ministers of the Union for the Mediterranean under the Co-Presidency of H.E. Catherine Ashton, European Union High Representative and Vice-President of the European Commission and H.E. Reem Abu Hassan, Minister of Social Development of the Kingdom of Jordan and H.E. Najat Vallaud-Belkacem, Minister of Women's Rights and Government spokesperson of the Republic of France in her capacity of host country met in Paris on 12 September 2013.

11 September 2013: Following meetings on the draft declaration, previously held in Brussels and in Malaga, UfM Senior Officials in charge of women's rights/gender issues held a meeting on the 11 September to finalise the Draft Declaration. EESC member, Grace Attard and REX Secretary Guy Harrison attended the meeting as observers. After a few general comments, there was unanimous agreement on the Draft Declaration.

The rest of the meeting was taken up with a discussion on the proposal for Civil Society to address the Ministerial Meeting on the 12 September and to participate in the future Conferences on the same lines as was done in Marrakech (2009). Several UfM Member States however, expressed doubts about the involvement of civil society in the Ministerial Conference, reiterating comments made at previous SOM meetings, in particular Egypt. They also raised questions regarding the composition of the civil society delegation and the organisations involved in the civil society conference of the previous week. As a result the intervention of civil society – apart from the EESC – was postponed until

after the Ministerial conclusions were adopted.

The Chair also announced the date of the next Ministerial Meeting to be held in 2016. The Jordan Minister for Social Development, H.E. Reem Abu Hassan UfM Co-President announced that a UfM Ministerial meeting will be held on the 3 and 4 October 2013 in Vilnius, Lithuania, currently holding the EU Council Presidency.

12 September 2013: The opening session was presided by the Co-Presidents of the UfM, European High Representative for Foreign Affairs H.E. Catherine Ashton and Vice-President of the European Commission and Jordan Minister of Social Development H.E. Reem Abu Hassan, followed by a welcome speech by French Minister for Women's Rights and spokesperson of the French government, H. E. Najat Vallaud-Belkacem.

In her statement H. E. Catherine Ashton called the event a celebration reflecting the success of women who participated in these turbulent times on the front together with men. The UfM has to stand up for women who are facing challenges that are changing the region and that are an example to all countries fighting for democracy and human rights.

H.E. Reem Abu Hassan made a strong statement on the renewed commitment of the UfM to ensure the empowerment of women.

H.E. Najat Vallaud-Belkacem spoke on behalf of the French President Francois Hollande and expressed her determination to see the Paris recommendations translated into a practical action plan followed by relevant projects. In March 2014, a meeting will be held in Barcelona at the UfM to discuss the proposed projects. She also highlighted the importance of annual follow-up meetings to discuss developments and regular meeting dates with civil society representatives who have the political, economic and social responsibility to create a network providing access to the decision-making people. On a sad note she referred to the situation of women in Syria who are often used as instruments of war and who are fighting for their rights the rights of

society and the rights of their children – the future generations.

### Working Session

During this session chaired by the French Minister, each Euromed Member State made a presentation of the initiatives being carried out in their country to promote women's rights. This involved presentations by about 35 member states. This was followed by a short presentation by ARLEM and the EESC, the only non-state actors that were given speaking time prior to the adoption of the conclusions. Although the time was short, Grace Attard made an intervention highlighting the structure and work of the EESC, its role in participatory democracy and its contribution to women's rights in the Euromed region. She also stressed the importance of setting up of independent economic and social councils at national level, with civil society on equal partnership, involving also employers and workers' representatives. She also highlighted the role of the EESC working with national ESCs



The adoption of the Paris Declaration was followed by an invitation to the Euromed Civil Society Forum to make a brief presentation of their Final Declaration for the Ministerial Conference, although regrettably after the adoption of the Ministerial Conclusions.

It is hoped that as a result of the participation of the EESC in this event, this will pave the way for EESC participation in future meetings of the UfM, as a result of efforts made by the EESC Secretariat with the EEAS, the UfM Secretariat and the Jordanian Co-Presidency.

Grace Attard, NCW, EESC Euromed Follow-up Committee member

## Launch of the Gender Equality Index by EIGE

After three years of hard work, the first Gender Equality Index for the European Union, a measurement tool to support policy-making and to help setting political priorities, was launched by the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) on 13 June 2013 at an event hosted by the Council's President.

This index provides scores for each Member State and presents an EU average in each of the following areas of gender equality: work (69%), money (68.9), knowledge (48.9), time (38.8), power (38) and health (90.1). The areas of violence and intersecting inequalities were treated separately because of the current unavailability of comparable data. They should be developed in the next update of the index, expected for 2015.

EESC members participating in the discussion were Madi Sharma: Rapporteur of SOC/446 "Female Entrepreneurs", SOC/475 "Women on company boards" and Grace Attard: Co-rapporteur of SOC/471 "The gender dimension of the Europe 2020 Strategy" and Judite Berkemeier SOC Section Secretariat

During the debate, Madi Sharma pointed out that she missed a reference the role of entrepreneurship since gender equality is definitively an economic issue, and Grace Attard asked what levels of high education

regarding gender differences had been taken into account in the knowledge indicator. A Maltese delegation representing NCPE was also present.

EIGE on-line discussion 26-27 September 2013

The morning discussion raised a number of issues. The need for more subjective indicators was touched on as was the difficulty in measuring some types of information (e.g. labour market discrimination) and the need for harmonised information.

Next, the need to move from measurement to action was mentioned by a number of participants, and the problem of matching causes to outcomes. Under topics dealing with action the EESC proposals on gender in Europe 2020 were linked, and in some posts the European Semester and Spring Council (which deals with social affairs) were suggested as vehicles. Other participants considered applying the Index at national level and its importance for national actions.

Experience from Latin America suggests one advantage of the Index is that hard numbers make it easier to justify changes. The idea of 'naming and shaming' was supported by some participants, but others preferred the Index to be used by individual national authorities to inform their own

efforts in meeting their own particular circumstances.

There were exchanges on the role of civil society in using the Index to achieve change, including as part of a collective bargaining process. In the afternoon, discussions concerned how the Index might be implemented, some favouring forceful EU level action, others a more national approach. A contribution from the Netherlands highlighted the difficulties of interpretation, and called for more detailed guidance. And another from Italy suggested the EU role is to cause the member states to take ownership of the Index, a suggestion echoed by a post from the Czech Republic as a means to get Gender onto the Agenda

The gender-consequences of the current crisis were also mentioned. Earlier in the morning participants raised the issue of how to incorporate more 'subjective' indicators, such as norms, attitudes and stereotypes. This issue is interesting for thinking about how to broaden the scope of the Index — a question we will address tomorrow.

Website: [www.eige.europa.eu](http://www.eige.europa.eu)

<http://eurogender.eige.europa.eu>

by courtesy of Judite Maria Berkemeiere, EESC SOC Section Secretariat

**Grace Attard, EESC, NCW**

## The National Youth Parliament



This year was the 11th edition of the National Youth Parliament which is organized by the National Youth Council (KNZ). This is an educational activity in which many young people look forward to and enables them to discuss political and social issues which concern them. It brings together young people which participated in previous events and those which have never participated before. This event helps young people to learn more about democracy and how the Parliament works.

They are divided into two groups, according to age, with one group consisting of those aged between 13 and 17, and the other those aged between 18 and 35. This year the National Youth Council decided to

increase the age of participation from 30 years till 35 years. The National Youth Council presented three themes for each age group. Those for the group under the age of 18 discussed: The importance of sport in our country; more active youth, The Education System: what needs to be changed? and Youth involvement in today's society. The themes for older participants were: A more effective justice system that reflects today's society, In Vitro Fertilisation (IVF) and "Xoghhol Prekarju". Applicants had the possibility to choose one of these themes. Every team had a coordinator who was the leader. The teams started meeting each other to formulate their resolutions. In the Parliamentary session which took place on the 19th of

September, the teams had the opportunity to discuss and amend each other's resolutions. A programme of events was prepared and the events took place during Summer. An introductory seminar took place where any queries were clarified. Towards the end of July, a weekend live-in was organised for the group aged between 13 and 17, and a one-day seminar was held for those aged 18 to 35. These seminars served as a platform for training participants on policy-making, team-building and other soft skills. This event offered an opportunity for young people to participate more actively in society and to voice their opinions on certain subjects that they encounter in everyday life.

**Isabelle Camilleri**  
NCW Executive Member



**The National Youth Parliament**



# DIARY OF EVENTS

## July

2nd	Meeting at the National Archives US Independence Day Concert Commencement of the English Summer Course
3rd	Education Committee Meeting
5th	Meeting with The Hon. José Herrera, Parliamentary Secretary for Culture and Local Government Mary Gaerty, Doris Bingley and Marie Demicoli attended
7th – 10th	EYCA meeting in Zagreb Doris Bingley represented ECICW & NCW
9th	MCESD meeting with Clyde Caruana Mary Gaerty attended
11th	Lithuanian Presidency of the Council of the European Union Public Dialogue Doris Bingley attended Meeting with Clyde Caruana jobs+ Mary Gaerty and Marie Demicoli attended Public Talk: Impact of Technology in Our Day to Day Life Doris Bingley attended
12th	Consultation Session on Malta National Report to be submitted to the Human Rights Council at the Ministry of foreign Affairs Nadyanne Mangion attended
15th	Laqgħa għal Nisa B'Dizabilita Doris Bingley represented CWN at the CSO Meeting in London
16th	Domestic Violence group meeting
17th	NCPE Training Session Dar L-Europa, Mary Gaerty attended
18th	MCESD, Report discussion, Mary Gaerty attended
19th	MCA workshop Marie Demicoli attended MEPA Discussion Seminar Grand Hotel Excelsior Mary Gaerty attended
23th	Youth in Action Funds Meeting Doris Bingley attended
24th	NCPE Annual Conference Mary Gaerty and Doris Bingley attended Consultation Meeting Partnership Agreement EU Fund 2014 -2020 Doris Bingley attended
29th	MCA Digital Malta Enabling Economic Growth & Social Well-Being at MITA Centre Executive Committee meeting
30th	Konferenza Sena Europea Cittadini

2013 Doris Bingley attended  
Visit to PN, Dr Simon Busuttil, Claudette Buttigieg and Dr Beppe Fenech Adami, Mary Gaerty, Doris Bingley, Grace Attard

## August

1st	MEUSAC consultation on Water Doris Bingley attended
2n	MCESD CSC meets The Hon Minister Helena Dalli
7th	Grace Attard NCW 1st Vice President/EESC member conducted two workshop with groups of young people from all over Europe
9th	European Year for the Citizen Dialogue Doris Bingley and Marie Demicoli attended
23rd	Meeting with Dr Peter Agius, MEP Malta Office NCW fundraising barbeque at Mary Gaerty's Residence
29th	EIGE Launch of the Gender Equality Index Grace Attard attended MCESD CSC Meeting Delegate Doris Bingley

## September

2nd	Environment Committee MCESD CSC meeting with Commissioner Wain
3rd	PPCD Meeting in Qormi Doris Bingley attended
4th	Executive meeting Business Breakfast Meeting of Men against Violence group
4th	Preparatory meeting of Euromed Civil Society. Grace Attard attended
4-5th	UFM Women's Rights Committee meeting on Women in Governance and Women and the creation of Jobs in Amman Jordan Grace Attard attended
5th	Social Inclusion at Ministry for the Family & Social Solidarity Doris Bingley attended Majestral Action MAGF Group Foundation Information session Dar L-Europa Mary Gaerty attended
6th	EESC IT Meeting at Hotel Excelsior Doris Bingley IT Microsoft Conference Marie

7th	Demicoli attended Newsbook Fis-Sajf Programm on RTK Mary Gaerty as guest speaker
9th	Public Consultation meeting with Finance Minister, Mary Gaerty attended
11th – 12th	Grace Attard participated in the Paris Ministerial Meeting on Women's Rights in the Euromed Region
12th	Seminar Organise by Malta Council For the Voluntary Sector together with Ministry for Family & Social Solidary On the Draft National Strategy against Poverty Social exclusion Nadyanne Mangion and Marie Demicoli attended
13th	Women on Board Public Dialogue Faqar u Egaljanza f'it-Teatru Rjal
16th	Media kick Off for the European Elections on May 2014 by Dr Peter Agius Head of the European Parliament Office in Malta Marie Demicoli attended Visit to Prime Minister with regards to Petition 'oneofus' Mary Gaerty attended with Dr Edric Micallef Figallo
20th	Independence Day Concert at the President's Palace Valletta, Mary Gaerty and Doris Bingley attended
21st	Independence Day Mass at St John's, Mary Gaerty and Doris Bingley attended
23rd	EESC Seminar, Malta in the Single Market Your ideas to change it. Mary Gaerty and Doris Bingley attended
26th	China National Day Mary Gaerty and Doris Bingley attended
27th	Competition Law – How does it affect you MCCA Seminar, Mary Gaerty attended Premju għac-Cittadin Europew Grace Attard attending The Strategic Role of Creative Thinking Doris Bingley and Marie Demicoli attended
28th	Valuing & using Skills Development through Volunteering as a Pathway into Employment
30th	Enterprise Consultation Council Meeting Mary Gaerty attended Central Committee Meeting ACR Meeting

## New Members

Justin Busuttil Gaerty from Balzan  
Josephine Agius from Tarxien

Amanda Cassar from Luqa  
Victoria Vella Gaffiero from B'kara

Doris Chetcuti from Qwara  
Adriana Caruana from Zabbar

## Flash News

### LEAP! Building the future together by promoting social mobility

MCESD members were invited by the Hon Minister Helena Dalli, Minister for social Dialogue, Consumer Affairs and Civil Liberties for the presentation of the project "LEAP! Building the future together by promoting social mobility" by the Hon Minister Marie-Louise Coleiro Preca. The initiative aims to strengthen the Social Welfare sector and tackle the risk of poverty rate. **NGOs will be able to form Public Social Partnerships in a National Anti-Poverty Strategy.**

### Men against Violence Campaign

Men against Violence Campaign will be launched on the morning of 25th November 2013 by the Hon. Minister Marie Louise Coleiro Preca at the Ministry of the Family and Social Solidarity Palazzo Ferreria, Republic Street, Valletta.

## FORTHCOMING EVENTS:

### Mass for the Repose of the Souls of Past Members -1st November 2013

Mass for the Repose of the souls of Past Members on Friday 1st November at 6.00pm at NCW Centre followed by light refreshments.

### Gozo Outing - 8th November 2013

The Environment Committee will be organising an outing to Gozo on Friday 8th November 2013 Transport leaves Blata l-Bajda at 7.30am The itinerary includes a presentation by the EcoGozo Regional Development. Places are limited please book early. €10 per person which includes refreshments and transport.

### Seminar In-Nisa fit-Tmexxija - 30th November 2013

Kunsill Nazzjonali tan-Nisa flimkien ma' Kunsill Nazzjonali taż-Żgħażaġh (KNZ) u Young Entrepreneurs & Leaders (YEL) se jorganizzaw Seminar, "In-Nisa fit-Tmexxija" li se jsir nhar is-Sibt 30 ta' Novembru f'9:15 ta' filgħodu ġewwa Dar l-Ewropa, Triq San Pawl il-Belt Valletta.

### The Role of Women in China Today - 4th December 2013

NCW Malta is very pleased to invite Mrs Jane Wang to give us a talk on "The Role of Women in China Today" on Wednesday 4th December 2013 at NCW Centre.

### Computer courses for the over 65

Members and friends of NCW can register with the Malta Communication Authority for a free basic computer course by phoning 25903137/25903173.

### Christmas Party - 6th December 2013

NCW will be celebrating the Christmas Festivities on Friday 6th December 2013 at the Don Bertu Restaurant, Vittoriosa Waterfront at 7:30pm. €25 per person. Early booking is recommended. Transport available at an extra cost.

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](mailto:ncwmalta@camline.net.mt)

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