

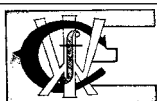


N-Mara

Newsletter of the National Council of Women - Malta

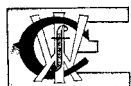


Members of


**International Council
of Women**

Founded 1888

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


**European Centre of the
International Council of
Women**

Founded 1961

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

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Front Cover:

*The Delegates at the Commonwealth
Women's Forum during CHOGM
November 2015*

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Monday to Friday: 9.00 - 13.30

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Il-Mara

NEWSLETTER OF THE NATIONAL COUNCIL OF WOMEN - MALTA

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EDITORIAL

Dear Colleagues and Friends
As we welcome the New
Year 2016, there are so
many initiatives that NCW has
organised throughout 2015 that
call for serious reflection on the
way forward to address current
changes and needs. It was indeed
a successful and busy year.

The articles in our newsletter
are clear evidence of the
National Council of Women Malta as a truly
multidisciplinary organisation. With regards
to our External Relations we will listen to the
involvement of NCW in the European Centre of
the National Councils of Women (ECICW) and the
International Council of Women (ICW) and the
European Economic and Social Committee (EESC)
In support of the Life Network, NCW has been
very active lobbying for prolife legislation in line
with the Embryo Protection Act as well as various
aspects of gender equality. The NCW newsletter
will also publish the report on the conference
'Towards the development of Social Enterprise
in Malta' organised by NCW in response to the
government White Paper which speaks about
the future opportunities for the sustainability
of NGOs together with the involvement of the
Social Partners

Included in this issue is the Annual General
Meeting Agenda for January 2016. It is the time
when we take stock of all that has been done,



listen to the presentations
of the Executive Committee
members' reports on
financial matters, education
and youth, social affairs,
the environment, public
hearings and conferences,
policy documents drawn up
and presented to the relevant
Ministers, such as Budget 2016
and Pensions Reform and not

least the different programmes of NCW as a
Centre of learning

The AGM is an important forum for our
members to contribute with their ideas and
skills for the NCW network to look ahead.
We encourage you to take the opportunity
to come forward with your suggestions on
various topics and activities. Your suggestions
are warmly welcome if you send them to us
in advance of the meeting. Indeed we look
forward to meeting as many of you as possible
for this important event in the NCW Calendar
Many thanks to all those people who have
helped and supported the National Council of
Women in one way or another, and we look
forward to another successful year in 2016.
Wishing you all a very prosperous New
Year 2016.

Marie Demicoli
NCW Editorial Board Member

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President's Message

Dear Ladies

As another year comes to an end, we take stock of what we have managed to accomplish but also what we have failed or omitted to do. As happens every year, we formulate our resolutions, some of which are identical to those intended the previous year, or perhaps even years before, but as human beings we are definitely not perfect!

Since the last time we met, important events have taken place in Malta, one of which was the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM). Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II and Prince Philip, together with Prince Charles and The Duchess of Cornwall arrived in Malta for a three day visit amid maximum security but huge anticipation for the success of the meetings between the fifty three Heads of States. Apart from the Business Forum which is well attended, there were also the Youth Forum, the People's Forum and for the first time a Women's Forum. Bringing together women from the wealthier countries but also from the more vulnerable regions of the Commonwealth, women with different cultures, costumes, adversities and background, but with one common goal- to move ahead in gender equality in all spheres, was a challenge in itself. Issues such as female genital mutilation, education, work, media and other topics were discussed. One of the sessions I participated in, was the entrepreneurship workshop, not only were the women speakers an inspiration, but the contributions from those present were full of aspirations for future cooperation. All the recommendations from all the sessions were forwarded to the Heads of State for action and implementation. Meeting such incredible women throughout the three days was an amazing experience, not only in succeeding to make new contacts, but also to discuss daily issues that although we were so diverse in culture, still basic problems such as work life balance and

gender equality issues were common to all. We hope that the momentum reached during the meetings will be sustained and cooperation between the Commonwealth countries develops further.

The first of three courses funded by the Malta Community Chest Fund (MCCF) is now well underway and shall terminate on the 7th of January 2016. The fifteen participants all report to have gained self esteem and an inner strength, an essential ingredient in self empowerment. The course aims at giving the attendees the initial skills in order to either enter the labour market or to pursue a study program. We believe that financial independence will assist in avoiding the poverty trap. We augur that these fifteen women will find a new stepping stone for the betterment of their future.

In the coming weeks prior to the Annual General meeting we shall be preparing the resolutions presented by the affiliated organisations and NCW. We are pleased to see that a considerable number of resolutions have been implemented by the government over the years, proof that the changes were indeed required. I encourage all those, both individual members and affiliated organisations, to come forward, if you believe that there is a particular issue that requires attention. There may be others who do not have the opportunity to bring it to light, but are depending on you!

With Christmas and the New Year just a few days away, special wishes are being sent to you and your loved ones. From my heart I wish you all a Blessed Christmas and a New Year full of Love, Health and Prosperity.



Mary Gaerty
President

Elena Grech

The European Commission has appointed Elena Grech as the new Head of the European Commission Representation in Valletta. She will take up office on January 1, 2016. Dr Grech has more than twenty years' experience in Foreign Affairs and European policy. Ms Grech holds legal qualifications from the University of Malta including a Diploma of Notary Public and a Degree of Doctor of Laws.



Grace Attard

In view of her active participation and experience in the EESC, former EESC Member Grace Attard has been identified as expert for gender equality and the Euromed Region. She has also been elected as delegate to the European Economic & Social Committee's Consultative Committee on Industrial Change (CCMI) for its 2016 to 2020 term, where she will be representing ANEC and working to provide a better balance between Industry and Consumers



Advancing in Society through Empowerment

What is empowerment? And how does this help people advance in society? Empowerment can be defined as “the process of enhancing the capacity of individuals or groups to make purposive choices and to transform those choices into desired actions and outcomes”. Empowerment is a very powerful term, and self-efficacy is the key for individuals to gain empowerment. A functional society is based on functional and efficient people, thus empowered individuals is a means of strengthening the dynamics of society.

There are many different ways why people need to be empowered, mainly: lack of self-esteem and self-confidence, lack of general personal and social skills, recovering from a traumatic episode in their lives, and individuals who would like to embark in employment but lack the right skills to do so. There is one common factor in the reasons mentioned, and that is personal enrichment and enhancement. Empowerment is founded on self-determination, personal growth, value of own skills and abilities, and positive attitude towards personal success. Empowered people have adequate skills to achieve freedom of choice and action. Thus enables them to better influence and control the course of their lives and the decisions that they take daily.

The National Council of Women and the Association for Consumer Rights Malta have acknowledged the importance of empowering

individuals, especially those who are determined to enhance themselves and advance in society. A course was organised by these entities, and was funded with the support of the Malta Community Chest Fund. The aim of the course is to support individuals through encouraging them to reflect on themselves and eventually enhance their own empowerment. The course was delivered for the first time between November 2015 and January 2016, and was presented through various interesting topics with the involvement of a number of professional trainers. The sessions included personal skills topics: assertiveness training; problem solving and decision making; communication skills; stress management; time management; teamwork and skills audit. The course also included employability skills topics: health and safety at the workplace; work ethics; job searching skills; employment law and the labour market trends; CV writing; and Starting your own business training. The course included other general topics, such as social media and IT awareness, financial education and public speaking.

The participants of the first training group found this course very interesting and helpful. Most of them admitted that throughout their lifetime, they did gain the skills that were addressed in the course however they rarely had the time to reflect on them and think about how to enhance



them thus helping them gain more empowerment. As a trainer I could notice that the participants were improving themselves every single day, from the way they presented themselves, the way they communicated with each other, and most of all their self-positivity and self-worth has increased. They learnt that empowerment is about reflecting on what they already know and how to enrich it, open up themselves to new experiences and skills, and most of all they now value themselves more thus resulting in increased self-efficacy.

Advancing in Society through Empowerment training is recommended to individuals who are looking to boost their own skills and acquire new ones, learn to appreciate and value themselves, improve their relationships with others, and most of all be more empowered to advance in society.

Josette Barbara Cardona
B. Psy (Hons) (Melit.), MSc.
Occ. Psych. (Leicester), PGDip.
Educ. (Derby), MBPSS
Doctoral Candidate



NCW Conference - Towards a Sustainable Social Economy for Malta



Following the Launch of the Social Enterprise Act in Malta earlier on in June and the current consultation, on this important legislation, National Council of Women organized a conference, to offer participants the opportunity to better understand this relatively new initiative for Malta, in the context of current EU developments. The aim of the NCW conference, which was held at Dar l-Ewropa on Thursday 12th November was to highlight the role of social entrepreneurship and social enterprise and its potential to economic growth and social development and to identify shared characteristics that are essential in developing a sustainable framework to build social cohesion, inclusion and active citizenship through voluntary associations, foundations, not-for-profit companies and SMEs amongst others.

NCW President Mary Gaerty highlighted the importance of the values of social entrepreneurship and its positive impact on society. She pointed out the importance of ensuring that the necessary measures for success must not be ignored as a social enterprise has to have market value to remain competitive.

EESC former member and NCW Vice-President Grace Attard gave an overview of the challenges the EU is facing as a result of the financial crisis and the austerity measures and the need to reinforce the social dimension of Europe through a bottom-up approach for a more inclusive society.

EESC Expert Marie Svolska representing the Employers Group called for smarter more inclusive and sustainable models through social enterprise, belonging to the people and/or created by people to address the complex social challenges of today. The EESC has been a catalyst for social innovation, which is a feature of the European Social model and will go

on doing so through the setting up of a permanent study group on social entrepreneurship.

Dr Nadine Lia, Ministry for the Economy, Investment and Small Business made a presentation of the Social Enterprise Act White Paper, which focuses on finding solutions to social needs that are not adequately addressed by market systems or the welfare state. In Europe it is a major job provider offering more than 11 million paid jobs in over 2 million social economy enterprises.

Another key feature of this type of economic activity is that profit is not the main driver for the organisation but the generation and sustaining of jobs within the economy in the delivery of products and services. Presently a number of co-operatives, foundations, associations, NGO, church organisations, entities and voluntary organisations work within our society to address social problems. Developing an organization into a social enterprise can help to combat social exclusion, unemployment, poverty and other vulnerable circumstances and foster local development. In Europe it is a major job provider offering more than 11 million paid jobs in over 2 million social economy enterprises. Statistical findings show that in Europe most Social enterprises are run by women, offering another option for economic activity.

Mr Simon Micallef, APS Bank consultant made a presentation tracing the developments of NGOs, foundations and co-operatives and the current framework legislation within which they operate. He explained that social economy is an opportunity for the third sector; however it needs to be sustainable through the social objective by ensuring that the majority of the revenue from the services of the company are used to generate revenue for further development of the social enterprise. The social objective is paramount in addressing the

needs of 'vulnerable' groups as well as ensuring that the community benefits from these services. He also described a range of financial packages such as loans through banks, Malta Enterprise, the European Investment Bank and Intermediary banks and access to Venture Capital for the Social Sector.

GRTU representative Matthew Agius spoke about SMEs as the backbone of the EU and Malta's economy, particularly geared for this kind of economic activity based on the philanthropic, social and environment pillars from a bottom-up approach.

Isabelle Farrugia, UHM Education and Culture and Josef Bugeja recently elected Secretary General, GWU provided current statistics which reveal the high rates of workers in social enterprises; this could be an attractive option for young people who are interested in innovative forms of work.

In his concluding remarks, Hon Minister Chris Cardona, referring to the White Paper, stated that Social Economy is a new concept for investment, reaching out to people. He also referred to barriers for economic activity such as the need for less bureaucracy and the need for training to ensure employees have the necessary workplace, management and financial skills to ensure sustainability. He made a special reference to women who are becoming the driving force of social enterprises and combined with the range of measures currently in place by government will increase the participation rates of women in the labour market. The discussion from the floor offered expertise by different participants who, either run a social enterprise themselves or who have acted as advisors to government in other EU member states. A set of recommendations is being currently prepared as a follow-up to the Conference.

**Grace Attard,
NCW, Vice-President**

MCVS Training for NGOs Leadership in the Voluntary Sector



The Malta Council for the Voluntary Sector organised a National Training Conference between the 3rd and the 5th December 2015 at the Marina Hotel Corinthia Beach Resort, St George's Bay. The theme of this year's conference was "Leadership in the Voluntary Sector".

Mr Nathan Farrugia, Chairperson Malta Council for the Voluntary Sector welcomed the participants followed by a presentation by Ms Perdita Wingerter, CEO and founder of the NGO "Gemeinsam leben & lernen in Europa" (Living and learning together within Europe) with the theme "Professional Volunteering, How to find and keep volunteers"

A panel made up of Mr Nathan Farrugia, Ms Perdita Wingerter, Dr Vanni Xuereb (Head of MEUSAC), Dr Andrew Azzopardi (Lecturer) and Ms Nora Macelli (CEO St. Jeanne Antide Foundation) presented various experiences about sections of volunteering. This was followed by a lively discussion moderated by Mr Mauro Pace Parascandolo.

On the second day the plenary session

had the theme: "Challenges in Leading a Voluntary Organisation in today's world". Mr Mariano Votta, Director of Active Citizenship Network, Italy delivered the presentation followed by an interesting discussion. Two sets of workshops followed. The first set was 'Communications Strategies in the Voluntary Sector' delivered by Mr Jesmond Saliba (MISCO), 'Making finance work for you' by Mr George Farrugia, and 'Getting Organisations to collaborate together' by Mr Mariano Votta. The second set of workshops was 'Accessing Funding and Training opportunities through EU and Local support' delivered by Ms Mandy Falzon (Head EU Funding, MEUSAC), 'Professional Volunteering, How to find and keep volunteers' by Ms Perdita Wingerter, and 'Leading and empowering a voluntary workforce' by Ms Claudia Taylor East (CEO, SOS Malta).

On the final day a plenary session on Corporate Citizenship for Responsible Enterprises (CORE) was delivered by Ms Maria Rauch (CEO, CORE). This was followed by another two sets of workshops. The first set consisted of 'Accessing Funding and Training opportunities through EU and Local support' again delivered by Ms Mandy Falzon, 'Public speaking' by Dr Joe Agius, and a CORE networking session by Ms Maria Rauch. The second set consisted of 'Leading and empowering a voluntary workforce' by Ms Claudia Taylor East, 'Making finance work for you' by Mr George Farrugia and 'Communications Strategies in the Voluntary

Sector' by Ms Diana Spiteri, Equinox.

In January 2016 MCVS will launch the Voluntary Organisations Projects Scheme with a fund of €700,000. Ms Maria Louisa Busuttil is the Fund Manager. She presented the new funding line to the participants. Another MCVS task is the "Volunteer ... make the difference!" awareness Campaign which will also start in January 2016.

The Hon. Minister Helena Dalli, Minister for Social Dialogue, Consumer Affairs and Civil Liberties officially closed the conference by addressing the participants and promising her support for the voluntary sector. She endorsed the 'Volunteer' awareness campaign and confirmed that the 'Voluntary Organisations Project Scheme Fund, is being carried out in partnership with the Ministry for Social Dialogue, Consumer Affairs and Civil Liberties with the aim that many voluntary organisations will benefit from it.

Doris Bingley
NCW Hon. General Secretary
MCVS Member



Delegation from the Office of the Commissioner for Protection of Equality from the Republic of Serbia and the OSCE visit NCW Centre

On Thursday 26 November the National Council of Women of Malta met with members of the Commissioner's delegation Jelena Jokanovic from the Democratization Department of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) working with Serbia's Commissioner for the Protection of Equality as part of their Mission to Serbia to work with state authorities and civil representatives to support their efforts in the areas of rule of law, democracy and human rights

The Mission aims to provide Ms. Brankica Jankovic Commissioner in Serbia with the opportunity to meet with counterparts abroad who have extensive experience in the area of protection from discrimination. To that end, the Mission organised a

visit to Malta for the Commissioner and five of her colleagues to meet with civil society representatives and Malta equality authorities

During the meeting, which was held at NCW Centre, President Mary Gaerty and Vice-President Grace Attard traced the developments of gender equality and the involvement of NCW since its establishment in 1964. They spoke about labour laws for equality, the introduction of the Gender Equality Act and the NCPE (The National Commission for Equality) and the role of NCW in drafting a strong Domestic Violence Act

They also spoke about the initiatives of NCW on policy, including pensions reform, annual budget proposals to be submitted to government and the Learning Centre

set up by NCW where a wide range of subject are taught to provide women with the necessary employability skills. They explained how NCW regularly organizes talks and conferences to inform the public on issues concerning women's development in all aspects - political, legal, social, economic and cultural.

The delegates had the opportunity to share their views for the development of gender equality in their country. Before leaving, they were given a number of NCW newsletters through which they can learn about our initiatives and develop their own adapting to the needs of their country

Grace Attard,
NCW Vice-President

Commonwealth reception in advance of CHOGM at St. James Palace London



*NCW Hon. General Secretary
Doris Bingley presented to Her
Majesty Queen Elizabeth II*

COMMONWEALTH WOMEN'S NETWORK STATEMENT ON THE COMMONWEALTH WOMEN'S FORUM

The Commonwealth Women's Network (CWN) is a strong voice for the advancement of women, and has continuously lobbied at the Women's Affairs Ministers Meeting, Partners Forum and other key spaces, for the greater involvement of women in Politics and Leadership. In numerous Statements and Press Releases it is stressed that without gender equality and freedom from violence against women, the advancement of women and their countries will be severely hampered.

It is therefore with a sense of relief that the Commonwealth Women's Network welcomes the first ever Commonwealth Women's Forum as part of the activities of the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM). It

is our hope that the deliberations of the Forum will build on the research and analysis and action already taken at civil society level, and at governmental level in some countries. In making this appeal, the CWN draws on the Statement from the Partners Forum held at the 8th WAMM" HELD IN Uganda in 2007, which in reference to women's leadership states as follows:

"Political leadership is a pre-condition for social and economic empowerment. Equal participation by women in governance and leadership can only be achieved by providing an enabling environment for women's leadership training and opportunities for engagement. We call on Member States to:

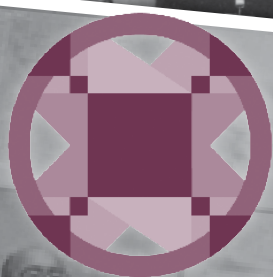
- Honor commitments to existing

30% targets and fast track towards equal representation of women in decision-making at all levels

- Support capacity-building and provide spaces for public advocacy amongst women leaders, potential women leaders and persons with disabilities, and women and girls in isolated communities and overseas territories.
- Provide opportunities for gender training for Parliamentarians".

The women of the regions eagerly await the outcomes of this CHOGM Women's Forum, expecting a well resourced plan for women's empowerment in the area of political leadership.

Nelcia Marshall-Robinson
Chairperson



CHOGM
Malta 2015





An historic moment - Patricia Scotland to be first woman Secretary-General



In what has been a true breakthrough for gender equality in the Commonwealth, Patricia Scotland of Dominica was selected new Secretary-General - the first woman to hold the post. Malta's Prime Minister Joseph Muscat made the announcement at a press conference during the Commonwealth summit.

Baroness Scotland, former UK Attorney General, will take office on 1 April 2016 as the sixth Secretary-General since the Commonwealth Secretariat was established in 1965. She will replace Kamallesh Sharma of India, whose eight-year tenure comes

to an end in March next year.

While talking to the press, she singled out climate change as an "existential threat" to small island states and reminded the audience about the extensive damage caused to her country by Tropical Storm Erika. She referred to the Paris Climate Conference (COP21) in December as an opportunity for the Commonwealth to really make its mark.

"COP21 gives us an opportunity to put the Commonwealth on a different path. I hope the Commonwealth will be a beacon of knowledge and care to put this right," said Baroness Scotland.

Responding to a question about the high number of Commonwealth countries that violate LGBTI rights, Baroness Scotland said that if the Commonwealth chooses to work together it will find a way to bring about this necessary change.

She stated: "Human rights and development go hand in hand. We will walk with and work with our partners to help everyone appreciate human dignity."

In her final remarks, Baroness Scotland pledged to prioritise gender equality and combat domestic violence.

"I am incredibly proud to be the first woman Secretary-General," she concluded.

The selection of the new Secretary-General took place in a closed session during the 24th biennial Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM). The process was overseen by the CHOGM Chair and the Prime Minister of Malta Joseph Muscat.

Doris Bingley

NCW Hon. General Secretary

New Head of Gender at the Commonwealth Secretariat

Amelia Kinahoi-Siamomua is a development practitioner/economist, and a graduate of Economics and Politics and post-graduate studies in Business Administration, Leadership and Development from the University of the South Pacific and Harvard University's Kennedy School of Government. She is currently the Head of Gender Section of the Commonwealth Secretariat based in London, UK.

Prior to joining the Commonwealth, Amelia had a distinguished career with the United Nations and was an Inter-Regional Adviser with the United Nations Department of Economics and Social Affairs (DESA) in New York. Amelia had also served in the United Nations system as a Senior Gender Advisor with UNDP and a Regional Programme Director of the United Nations Development Fund's (UNIFEM) Pacific Regional Office.

In previous capacities, Amelia

served as the Women's Development Adviser and Head of the Pacific Women's Bureau of the Secretariat for the Pacific Community based in Noumea, New Caledonia and also as Senior Program Advisor (Gender) with CARE International in Atlanta, USA. She also served with other regional and international organisations on economic and social development. Amelia served as the Development Cooperation Adviser for the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat (PIFS) in Fiji and during her tenure with PIFS, in March 1999, she was appointed by the European Commission to be one of two Deputy Regional Authorising Officers for Pacific regional projects provided under the Lome Convention.

Prior to her work with the PIFS, she worked for more than 7 years with the Asian Development Bank's regional office for the Pacific, based in Port Vila, Vanuatu as a Program/Economics Officer, and before then was serving in her home country



as an Economist for the Tonga Development Bank.

During her career, Amelia has presented papers at international, regional and national conferences, seminars and meetings on development issues. She brings with her more than thirty years of professional experience. Amelia is from Nuku'alofa, Tonga, and her interests include meeting people, tennis and gardening.

United Nations Industrial Development Organisation



The ICW-CIF is a mainstream NGO and its thrust is mainly informative and educational. It was founded in 1888 in Washington and was the first women's NGO worldwide. Its principal objectives are promotion of equal rights and responsibilities for both women and men, recognition and respect for human rights, support of all efforts to achieve peace through negotiation, arbitration and conciliation, integration of women in development and decision making bodies.

The ICW-CIF enjoys General Consultative Status with ECOSOC and with other organisms of the UN and works to meet the needs of women today through cooperation at all levels.

Having participated in all UNIDO General Conferences and the Vienna Energy Fora we are following closely the women-related agenda items of these conferences.

We congratulate UNIDO to the recently produced "Guide on Gender mainstreaming Business, Investment and Technology Services for Private Sector Development" and "Empowering Women: Fostering Entrepreneurship" and other very valuable and highly appreciated documentations in the field of Women, Girls and Gender Issues.

We welcome UNIDO's strong commitment to gender mainstreaming and to the SDGs

and hope that SDG 9 and SDG 5 will be given the needed importance, as we now have a goal for Energy what was not the case in the MDGs.

With regard to the Climate Conference held in Paris in these days and the 17 SDGs adopted two months ago and UNIDO's work program we will communicate their important linkages to our affiliates and translate words into action.

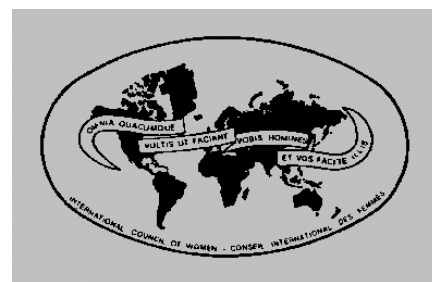
In our days of the asylum/migration crisis it is crucial to fight poverty as one of its root causes in order to prevent people from leaving their homes and to enable them to have decent work, to provide education for girls, to create jobs for women and to promote women entrepreneurship, one of the tools to overcome these challenges of our days.

Domestic violence and violence against women and children often is caused by economic hardships. Encouraging and creating economic freedom of women among others through women entrepreneurship and other UNIDO programs will help to overcome these scourges.

Some countries have kept up to date with micro-credit loan programs aimed especially at women in their area. These have proved to be very successful over a number of years. Ensuring that rural women have access to marketing facilities, appropriate technology and enjoy adequate living conditions, particularly in relation to housing, sanitation, electricity and awareness of growing extra crops is a vital element of the work of many of our ICW affiliates.

In working towards achieving the 2030 agenda the ICW will continue advocating for the rights of the girl child, all girls, that they may fulfil their potential as future leaders. They are the vision for 2030.

UNIDO is contributing a lot towards the chances of girls and women by providing education and job programs. At the same time girls are enabled to overcome modern forms of slavery such as trafficking



in women and girls, early forced marriages and related health risks.

Much has been done in ICW since I reported at the GC in 2011 on the Plan of Action on **"Women in Agriculture - Building a Sustainable Future"**.

The ICW is to urge each country to realize the urgency of the need to commit to reduce emissions substantially (30-40% post Paris), and adopt practices that sequester carbon. That if insufficient actions are taken, then future generations will suffer more, and changes will be much more costly. There is a moral imperative to take responsibility for making the needed changes. That is about ecological or environmental sustainability, for if we, as humans, do not learn to live more sustainably, in the long term our way of life is just not sustainable.

We see with great joy the giving of special importance to industry related targets which are so important for women's lives in LDCs and Developed countries, stressing especially the forward looking strategies.

Last but not least we want to thank all women who continue to lighten the burden of financial difficulties in their grass root communities and urge them to continue the vital work while seeking support from existing tools produced by the UNIDO.

In conclusion: let us join forces in supporting and promoting UNIDO's work towards a world in gender equality and in dignity. All of us will profit from an equal participation of women in creating a learning society and at the same time strengthening therefore social and economic wellbeing.

Eleonore Hauer-Rona



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Stand up for Life



After launching the petition Malta Stand Up for Life, a public demonstration - The **Rally4Life** was held on **Sunday 6th December at 2.00pm.**

A silent walk by hundreds of people of all ages from Castile Place, down Merchants Street, past St John's Cathedral and up Republic Street ended in the Parliament Square where live music by GianLuca & Band promoted a spirit of joy in safeguarding the rights of the unborn child from the moment of conception

Speakers from various organizations supporting the Protection of the Embryo Act made short yet compelling presentations. NCW President Mary Gaerty, one of the speakers, spoke on behalf of the National Council of Women, highlighting the strong belief that embryos are human beings and therefore their dignity should be respected at law and in practice

In a vibrant voice, Gianna Jessen, an abortion survivor, delivered a key message, giving testimony of her experience, the meeting with her natural mother and her determination to spend her life promoting the protection of human life from conception and warning her listeners to keep abortion out of Malta. In spite of her physical disability as a result of the attempted abortion, her physical and emotional energy were an inspiration to all those present.

People continually flocked to the stands signing the petition in favour of the Embryo Protection Act. Dr Miriam Sciberras, Chairperson of the Life Network Foundation addressed the hundreds of people present in a strong clear voice

full of conviction that Maltese citizens have always stood up for Life and now in respecting the dignity of the unborn child from its first moments of conception, she called on Malta to rise up again to ensure that there will be no tampering with Embryo Protection Act.

Grace Attard, NCW Vice-President, Founder Member Life Network Foundation



Grace Attard together with key speaker Gianna Jessen

DANGER FROM SOME NAILPOLISH ON THE MARKET

Avery recent study by researchers of **Duke University** USA and **EWG** who uses the power of information to protect public health and the environment detected the danger of a common nail polish chemical called triphenyl phosphate, or TPHP. This chemical was found in every woman who volunteered to paint her nails for this study.

TPHP which is a suspected endocrine-disrupting chemical which is also used in plastics manufacturing and as a fire retardant in foam furniture, enters the human body via the nail polish. In some products the acronym TPP is used for this chemical and it should be listed according to law if a product contains TPHP. Out of 30,000 nailpolishes tested 49% listed contained this ingredient but worse of all they did not list it.

The manufacturers most probably added TPHP as a plasticizer to render the polishes more flexible and durable. The concentrations ranged from 0.49 % to 1.68% by weight. Clear nail polishes contain more TPHP than the coloured ones.

The study found that when a woman applied nail polish directly to the nails, the levels of a biomarker of that chemical in their urine increased sharply. The urine

was tested for a chemical called diphenyl phosphate or DPHP this is created when the body metabolises TPHP. Researches are continuing with tests on cells and test animals, a few have also associated the chemical with changes in hormone and reproductive system. They are also furthering their tests to validate whether this chemical can also contribute to weight gain and obesity.

Having said this much about the chemical there is no better way to make sure weight gain and obesity is checked by making sure that the diet is a healthy one and plenty of water is drunk daily to flush out toxins out of the body. Exercise is also a must if one has to keep a check on body weight.

Normally most molecules do not penetrate the nail plate (Gupchup 1999) but the researches theorized that other ingredients such as nail enamel solvents and others used on nail plate rendered it more absorbent. The area near the capillaries which is skin would also play a role in carrying the chemical into the body.

When one considers that six hours after they painted their nails 24 of the 26 volunteers had slightly elevated levels of DPHP in their urine but 10 to 14 hours after all 26 had a risen average count of nearly sevenfold which suggests that

more TPHP had entered their body and metabolized into DPHP.

Some volunteers who collected urine over 48 hours the concentration seemed to peak 10 to 20 hours after painting their nails. These results the Duke/EWG report says that nail polish may be an important contributor to short term TPHP exposure. For frequent users this may be a long term hazard, It is thus most important to see whether a nail polish contains this chemical listed as TPHP or TPP before buying it. The Local market has quite a few Nail Polish Brands which are considered both as good brands or favourites which were named as containing TPHP, hence the importance or looking at ingredients.

It would also be wise at this stage to make sure when visiting a Beauty Therapist where work on face or body has to take place make sure she is not wearing nail polish herself. The reason I mention this is not only that for the sake of Professionalism she should not be wearing wear it but apart from TPHP which would not affect the client, there are other factors that the client might be allergic to.

Magda Magri Naudi
MABT President
Sec General CEPEC.

Extracts from the Report on the Situation of Women in the Euromed 2015

The varying circumstances in different countries in the Mediterranean region, particularly the conflict and instability affecting many southern Mediterranean countries require that the European Commission (EC) and governments of the countries of the Euro-Mediterranean region develop shared solutions to these challenges – including poverty, economic challenges, conflict and terrorism – which are resulting in unacceptable suffering, especially among women.

Improved data collection, disaggregated by sex, is needed to facilitate good governance and gender-sensitive policies. This will provide a true understanding of the situation for women (both in rural and urban settings) in a complex and changing environment.

The European Commission needs to support collective action involving all stakeholders, including governments, social partners and civil society, by creating networks and the necessary mechanisms to address women's rights in the region as part of the reform of the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP):

- to ensure that specific measures and targets to address gender equality are included in National Action Plans;
- to guarantee immigrant women individual rights at every stage in the migration process, not just rights deriving from family membership;
- to assess what proportion of EU Blue Card holders and those benefitting from the Directive on seasonal workers are women;
- to speed up the process of evaluating migrants' qualifications;
- to address the following issues: upskilling, deskilling, multilingual counselling services, providing information on rights and advice on access to vocational training, access to good quality jobs and the provision of childcare facilities.

All countries in the Mediterranean region to fulfil their obligations to sign, ratify and implement international conventions on women's rights effectively, including:

- the ratification of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms

of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) (1979);

- the ratification of the additional Palermo Protocol on trafficking as a form of violence;
- the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (ICC) on acts of violence, including, war crimes considered as weapons of warfare and acts of torture;
- the Council of Europe Istanbul Convention on Domestic Violence;
- the ILO Conventions on decent work, migrant domestic workers;
- full implementation of the recommendations of the Final Declaration of the UfM Ministerial Conference on Women held in Paris on 12 September 2013;

Social partners and civil society must ensure that collective action by trade unions, employers' representatives, grassroots organisations to actively collaborate to find sustainable solutions to the challenges that are creating obstacles to women to entering/remaining in the labour, including in areas such as:

- labour laws that guarantee decent salaries in line with ILO Conventions;
- elimination of sexual harassment in the workplace;
- the protection of female workers working in occupied territories and armed conflict zones
- social security measures and protection: maternity, paternity and parental leave;

Violence against women and trafficking: In cases of migration, asylum, trafficking and anti-discrimination issues, there is the need to address incidents of violence against domestic workers by persons living in the same household.

The practice of female genital mutilation should be strongly condemned and national authorities urgently need to reinforce the implementation of the law and calls on the Commission to support programmes aimed at eradicating the practice..

All countries should take immediate action to prohibit honour crimes and on both shores of the Mediterranean to eradicate female gender mutilation,

by introducing effective sanctions for perpetrators, along with effective campaigns to change societal attitudes.

There is also urgent need for measures to repeal articles in the law that exempt rapists or kidnappers from penalties if they marry their victims and to abolish judicial discretion, which gives a judge the right to object to an article in the penal code concerning penalties for rape and other forms of sexual abuse, including honour killing.

Tools for tackling sexual abuse by family members should be adopted and implemented, including witness protection programmes and help for women victims in police stations, hospitals and courts.

Women in armed conflict: Women in conflict stricken areas in the Arab region are left without much needed services or reparations, while perpetrators are able to avoid accountability and punishment. Governments to ensure that penal codes in the region contain specific provisions to protect victims – such as female victims of armed conflicts and minority groups – in order to uphold their rights during times of conflict. Such acts are in full violation of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court on acts of violence, including war crimes and torture.

Women and health: There are several issues relating to the health of women and girls in the region including access to good quality care, effectively reducing maternal death, addressing sexual and reproductive health and HIV and adequately responding to the required policies to close the gender gap in health.

Measures should be taken to address adolescent health, and in particular HIV, especially in areas where a culture of early marriage exists. School health clinics, which offer services such as counselling, information on sexual health and referrals to specialised counselling or treatment are already doing excellent work in countries such as Morocco and Egypt.

**Rapporteur EESC
member Grace Attard
NCW Vice-President**

2015 EUROMED SUMMIT OF ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCILS AND SIMILAR INSTITUTIONS

30 November and 1 December 2015, Brussels
Extracts form FINAL DECLARATION



The representatives of the Euro-Mediterranean region economic and social councils and economic and social players held their annual meeting on 30 November and 1 December in Brussels. This meeting marked the 20th anniversary of the Euromed Summits, which were launched on the basis of the mandate conferred by the Barcelona Declaration in 1995. The participants discussed the situation in the region, focusing firstly on the new European neighbourhood policy, the regional dialogue perspective, the participation of social and economic councils and players in the development of the region and secondly, on the need for common responses to the challenge of migration and refugees.

The participants reached agreement on measures to address:

The situation in the Euromed region

- all forms of violence and terrorism, human rights violations and the infringement of fundamental rights in the Mediterranean region;
- that the strengthening of security, albeit legitimate, should never be detrimental to the human values which are shared by all partner countries, or to the fundamental rights of all citizens;
- the EU and its Member States to provide further political, financial and material support, as has been the case with Turkey, to other countries in its southern neighbourhood, especially Lebanon and Jordan, which are already hosting millions of refugees, which clearly exceeds their economic and social capacity to deal with such a crisis;
- call for all aspects of dialogue and joint work (political, economic, social and cultural) to be revitalised in the region in order to enhance development and improve cohesion in their societies in view of the challenges that the Euromed region is facing
- urge the political authorities and the international community to take all necessary steps to speed up the achievement

of a just and lasting solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict on the basis of the relevant United Nations Resolutions and of the principle of an independent Palestinian state alongside the state of Israel;

On the new European Neighbourhood Policy

- underline the necessity of a greater role for civil society in the ENP, not only in further involving civil society organisations in ENP related commitments and activities, but also by calling on the ENP to ensure that it empowers civil society in all countries and ensures compliance with fundamental human, civil, political, economic and social rights;
- expect an ENP which rewards human rights implementation, a human rights-based approach to stability, sustainable and inclusive development, better mutual understanding of cultural diversity and the importance of social protection as a cohesive factor in society;
- underline that the free trade agreements between the EU and southern countries must seek to promote not only economic interests but also fundamental human values, respect for national sovereignty, and sustainable economic and social development that benefits both sides, and must contribute to creating a common area of shared values;
- urge the authorities to offer better education and opportunities to young people and women around the Mediterranean, to develop better mechanisms to match education and training with the needs of the labour markets, to ensure that measures that have a positive impact on the future of young people are included in their political priorities, and that demands of young people are better taken into account in those same decisions;
- demand that all the governments of countries in the Mediterranean region fulfill their obligations to sign, ratify and effectively implement international conventions on women's rights;
- recognise the need to promote women's participation in civil society organisations and highlight that enhancing women's rights, political participation and economic empowerment is not only a crucial factor to achieve equality between women and men, but that the region's development depends on making full use of its human capital at all levels;

On the role of the ESCs and economic and

social players

- call upon the governments of countries of the region to recognise civil society associations founded on democratic principles, to respect their independence, freedom of speech, right of association and demonstration, to provide them with a legal environment for access to information and to prevent restrictions and repression against them, wherever present; recall the importance of preserving the freedom of the media as a pivotal element for democracy;
- underline the key role of the economic and social councils and players in the consolidation of political democracy, in combating terrorism, and in the development of participative democracy;
- request that economic and social councils and players be regularly consulted and that their proposals and recommendations be incorporated into policy decision-making processes through dialogue with their relevant political authorities, as in the case of the Tunisian National Dialogue Quartet, which has been awarded the Nobel Peace Prize; On the response to refugee and migration flows
- recommend that the European Union authorities increase legal and safe pathways into the EU for refugees and migrants, so that they do not fall victim to criminal networks, that their human rights are respected, and that the negative impact of the military and security-based approach be kept to a minimum;
- call on the governments of all the countries of the Euro-Mediterranean region to develop policies aiming at integrating migrants in their societies with equal rights and at combating intolerance, racism and xenophobia towards immigrants; and urge them to ratify the international conventions on the protection of the rights of migrant workers and members of their families;
- demand that the renewed ENP establishes a clear and coherent link between policy actions on the southern countries and the EU's decisions on refugees asking for international protection in the EU countries;
- call on the national and EU authorities to take urgent measures to assist refugees and migrants who are currently in the EU but have no access to assistance;
- urge the national authorities and those responsible for refugee camps to take immediate steps to address the situation of women in these camps in order to ensure their protection and prevent abuse;

Grace Attard, NCW Vice-President

DIARY OF EVENTS

October

- 01st Public Dialogue about the EU with Commissioner Karmenu Vella Mary Gaerty, Doris Bingley and Marie Demicoli attended
PFWS launch of the New Forum on Ageing with Dignity Meeting at San Anton Palace. Grace Attard, Doris Bingley and Marie Demicoli attended
- 2nd EVPA & Inspirasia Malta Event; "Venture Philanthropy and Social Investment" Marie Demicoli attended
- 5th Meeting with the Minister of Education Mary Gaerty and Doris Bingley attended
- 6th Final Conference ENTER Project organised by MCA Doris Bingley and Marie Demicoli attended
- 7th Commonwealth Foundation Colloquium at Sorbonne Centre. Mary Gaerty, Doris Bingley and Marie Demicoli attended
Progress b'Responsabbilita Ir-Riforma fil-ligi tal- IVF – Forum Zghazagh Laburisti Mary Gaerty attended
- 8th Occasion of the Day of German Unity Reception Doris Bingley
- 12th – 15th 13th European Week of Regions and Cities Brussels Marie Demicoli attended
- 13th BreastCare Support Group Europa Donna Malta Hilda Schembri Memorial Lecture
- 14th – 20th Small States of Europe Conference and ICW/ECICW meetings in Luxembourg Mary Gaerty, Doris Bingley and Nadyanne Mangion attended
- 15th ALF Event: "Intercultural Dialogue for a Sustainable Mediterranean Future" Rebecca Wellman attended
- 16th MNPN discussion on issues related to Pensions Grace Attard was one of the speakers.
- 19th SIS information Session organised by the VO centre.
- 20th PFWS and the department of Economics of the university of Malta Conference at Verdala Palace
MCESD Public Hearing- "Contribution of Civil Society to Economic and Social well-being" Grace Attard attended
- 26th FITA Foundation for Information Technology Accessibility Seminar ICT Accessibility for a better Quality of

Life

- 27th Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth 11 Reception at St James's Palace in preparation for CHOGM 2015 Doris Bingley attended.
- 28th KNPD Conference- Living Independently and being included in the Community Amy Camilleri Zahra attended
- 29th Reception to celebrate the Anniversary of the Proclamation of the Republic of Turkey Mary Gaerty and Doris Bingley attended
- 31st Ghal Sistema ta' Pensjoni Adegwata u Sostenibbli conference at the Hotel Plaza Sliema

November

- 8th Remembrance Day celebrations Mary Gaerty attended
- 11th SOS Malta in collaboration with ALDA conference
- 12th "Towards a Sustainable Social Economy for Malta" organised by the National Council of Women at Dar l-Ewropa Valletta
- 14th Malta Girl Guides National Conference Lara Tonna attended
- 18th NCPE Conference Self reflecting session with Multidisciplinary Professionals on violence against Women and Girls Mary Gaerty and Amy Camilleri Zahra attended
- 19th Europe for Citizens Contact Point meeting Doris Bingley and Marie Demicoli
- 22nd – 24th Commonwealth Women's Forum at the Intercontinental Hotel . Mary Gaerty, Doris Bingley, Grace Attard, Lara Tonna, Tamara Gauci, Amy Camilleri Zahra, Jeanette Fava Cassar, Vivien Cassar, Diane Xuereb, Rebecca Wellman and Marie Demicoli attended.
- 25th ELSA Day Debate on Gender Equality Fransina Abela participated
Commonwealth People's Forum at Corinthia San Gorg and Parliament. Doris Bingley and Marie Demicoli attended
- 26th CHOGM Foreign Ministers' Meeting at Radisson SAS Hotel Doris Bingley attended
Meeting with the delegation from the Office of the commissioner for

Protection of Equality from the Republic of Serbia and OSCE Mary Gaerty, Grace Attard and Marie Demicoli welcomed the group at NCW Centre

Reception in honour of Her Majesty the Queen and the Royal Party at San Anton. Mary Gaerty and Doris Bingley attended.

- 27th CHOGM Opening ceremony at MCC Doris Bingley attended
Reception at Portomaso Tower by the Royal Commonwealth Society Doris Bingley attended
- 28th Roundtable of the Foreign Ministers at Radisson SAS Doris Bingley attended
- 30th Peer Learning Activity organised by the Education Department

December

- 1st Europe for Citizens Contact Point together with MEUSAC information session on the Europe for Citizens Programme
- 3rd -5th MCVS Training for NGOs Leadership in the Voluntary Sector. Doris Bingley attended all sessions.
- 3rd Kummissjoni Nazzjonali Persuni b' Dizabilita Konferenza Nazzjonali "Teknologija Accessibbli Ghazliet Ahjar"
- 4th NCPE Final Conference Gender Balance in Decision Making Mary Gaerty and Rebecca Wellman attended.
- 6th Rally4life March meeting at Castille Place Mary Gaerty and Grace Attard attended.
- 10th NGOs Award at The Palace Valletta Doris Bingley and Mary Gaerty attended.
- 14th Central Committee Meeting and Executive Committee Meeting
- 15th CORE Meeting at the Hilton Hotel Doris Bingley and Mary Gaerty attended
- 18th The President's Foundation for the Wellbeing of Society (PFWS) Ageing with Dignity Forum
- 19th National Council of Women Christmas Party at Inspirations St. James Cavalieri Valletta

New Affiliates and New Members

Soroptimist International Malta
Nexia Bt Specialist Advisory Services

Josette Barbara Cardona,
Anita Aloisio, Elise Xuereb

FORTHCOMING EVENTS:**Annual General Meeting****Saturday 30 January 2016****Palazzo Capua, Sliema**

- 8.30** Registration & Coffee
- 9.00** Welcome and Notices.
Nomination of Tellers
- 9.15** Minutes of the last General Meeting.
- 9.25** President's Address.
- 9.35** Annual Report by General Secretary
- 10.00** Financial Report by Treasurer.
- 10.15** Elections
- 10.30** Reports of Standing and Sectional Committees.

Coffee Break

- 11.15** Results of Election

Reaffirmation of Policy

1. Reaffirmation Protecting Children and Young People using the Internet
2. Reaffirmation Addressing the Rights of Undocumented Migrant Children
3. Reaffirmation Setting up of a Pre-Conception Clinic – Malta Union of Midwives and Nurses
4. Reaffirmation Providing and Co-ordinating Perinatal Mental Health Services - Malta Union of Midwives and Nurses
5. Reaffirmation Working Mothers and Breastfeeding - Malta Union of Midwives and Nurses

11.55 Adoption of Resolutions. (5 mins each)

1. Developing the Social Economy – adapting to the Maltese Situation

2. The TTIP and its impact on Civil Society by NCW Malta
3. Patient's Rights and Responsibilities by NCW Malta
4. Migration
5. Europe for Citizens – Rights & Equality by NCW Malta
6. Address the Gender Inequality at Executive & Board Levels by Nexia BT Advisory Service
7. The importance of women's leadership, equitable participation and empowerment as critical drivers for inclusive sustainable development
8. Women's empowerment in alignment with the targets for the Sustainable Development Goals by NCW Malta

- 13.10** Correspondence ICW, ECICW, EESC

- 13.15** Other Matters

- 13.20** Concluding Address by President

End of AGM LUNCH**Notes:*****The full text of the resolutions will be available at the AGM.***

All members and affiliated organisations are urged to attend. As only paid up members are entitled to vote, subscriptions should be renewed during the month of January or paid before the start of the AGM.

Doris Bingley**Hon. General Secretary****National Council of Women Malta****10 December 2015**

Wishing a Happy and Prosperous New Year to all NCW Members and their families.

HSBC