

Founded 1964

# 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 &  
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**Front Cover Photos**

Amy Camilleri Zahra honoured  
by the Ambassador for the United  
States

Empowerment Course Participants  
at Hilton Malta

**Office Hours**

Monday to Friday: 9.00 - 13.30

**Membership Subscription Rates**

New individual membership	€14.50
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Affiliated Organisations	€20.00
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Founded 1964

# Il-Mara

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

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## EDITORIAL

**D**ear Colleagues and friends  
As the end of the year draws  
near we find ourselves looking back  
at what NCW has achieved throughout the  
year 2016 and at the same time, whilst  
building on what we have carried out, look  
ahead at what more needs to be done in  
particular to reflect current and future issues.

The year 2017 is a big challenge  
as Malta will be the country leading the  
European Council presidency as it takes  
over after Slovakia. Many preparations  
are underway as the first six months of  
2017 – the term of the Maltese Presidency  
is not an easy one. Malta has to deal with issues such as EU  
member States reaching agreement on migration, the outcome  
of BREXIT and the increase in populist groups and terrorism  
and women victims of war, as well as issues concerning  
future skills for future careers. NCW has an important role  
to play especially regarding women in situations of conflict  
and in refugee camps

As we gear for the coming months we take stock of  
our initiatives and plan for the next year addressing issues  
including in particular Gender Violence and Domestic  
Violence; Female Entrepreneurship; Pensions entitlement  
and older women; the digital agenda – the role of women in  
technology and others. During the month of August, NCW  
submitted its Budget 2017 proposals and recommendations.  
We are currently studying the Budget 2017 hoping that many  
of our proposals have been given priority.

Besides organising our own specific conferences  
throughout the year, we have been involved in meetings,  
seminars and conferences even during the Summer. Sharing  
of good practice through networking is very important. We  
are proud that we have received recognition both at National  
level and at EU and International level.

As many of you are aware, NCW Learning Centre is one  
of the Council's most important initiatives. The now popular  
sessions in Mathematics, Advanced Computers, English



language and Conversation classes are  
attracting more individuals especially  
women who want to improve their  
academic qualifications either for  
personal development or more often,  
to build employability skills as they  
seek employment opportunities NCW  
is very grateful to Mr John Ellis  
for volunteering to conduct the  
English Language course for parents  
and children during the Summer  
months and to all the teachers,  
who provide excellent teaching and  
whose commitment is reflected in the

growing interest of participants in NCW Courses who are  
constantly motivated to continue their studies.

For NCW one very important decision taken was The  
Council of Europe vote rejecting a proposal to legalize  
and regulate surrogacy across all member states. The  
vote was won on the grounds that children are entitled  
to know their parents and that the female body  
and her reproductive organs should not be exploited.  
On this note I would like you to stop and reflect on the  
importance we need to give to the dignity of women.

In October we celebrate Pink October and together  
with our affiliated organisations, the Breast Cancer  
Support Group Europa Donna and Action for Breast Care  
Foundation, we ask for your support in all ways possible  
to help improve the quality of life of women suffering  
from Breast Cancer.

As this issue is the last issue for 2016, the members  
of the editorial board, wish you a holy and peaceful  
Christmas and look forward to a New Year 2017 with  
courage and determination.

As always we urge you to send in your contributions,  
suggestions and photos as it is an opportunity to share  
experiences with all our readers in Malta and beyond;  
We also welcome the new members who are always on  
the increase.

**Marie Demicoli**  
Editorial Board Member

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## President's Message

Dear Friends

Summer has come to a close and we welcome the fresh autumn days. What a busy summer it has been for all of us at NCW Malta.

One of the predominant issues that took over the summer months was undoubtedly the discussion about the Morning After Pill or Emergency Contraception as it is also known. Whatever name we give it, whether this or any other trade name, is really irrelevant. What is of real concern is why it is taken, by whom and whether the woman availing herself of it is informed about its use. Sexual education although starting at an early age in schools, still seems a long way from instilling in our youths a sense of responsibility with regards to sexual activity, which is starting now even in the early teens. The MAP is not an answer as many might have implied, for such situations but rather an uneducated immediate solution that may have severe repercussions on the health of the young girl or the woman. I am sure that the pharmacists will impart the necessary information when dispensing such medicines, making sure that the woman understands.

I had the opportunity to be invited to the launch of WEgate, a female entrepreneur platform, which launch was held in Brussels on the 30<sup>th</sup> of September. It was interesting meeting entrepreneurs from other EU and neighbouring countries and discussing how and what should be done to encourage more females to take up enterprise as a means of earning a living. A conference entitled 'Women Mean Business' was held in Malta soon after and information obtained from Brussels was disseminated to all those present. The dreams of so many women may one day in the near future become a reality, providing that they find enough funds, support, mentoring and passion to start and keep going.

Malta will hold the Presidency of the EU Council from January to June 2017. We are all awaiting to view the program and to see where we can be involved. It is an important six months for Malta and although we are a

small nation, in my opinion, we shall excel in these six months, albeit the difficult situation created through Brexit.

Malta was also the host country recently, to the Anna Lindh Med Forum 2016, where over six hundred foreign delegates from different countries gathered to discuss issues that are preoccupying them, propose solutions and act in order to arrive at the desired results. The youths were in focus throughout the whole event and their presence during the few days, was well noticeable. I felt that the young generation will listen if the message is given in the right manner, if they are involved and if they are mentored. It was indeed a wonderful experience and I hope that we shall continue corresponding with the friends we made during this time. Coming from the environmental sector, I could not but be impressed at the tables and seating options- all made from wooden pallets. My phone camera snapped quite a few pictures!!

We are planning new courses, providing that we find the financial support. Our recent three courses on Empowerment were a huge success and it is most gratifying to see a considerable number of the participants either already in employment or attending other classes such as ECDL, or both. We thank the Malta Community Chest Fund and the President of Malta, HE Marie Louise Coleiro Preca for this support and I am sure that the women and the very few men that attended these courses will be forever grateful to have received such benefits. I have only praise for the tutors and the contributors of these courses, for their professionalism and their dedication.

And with this, dear friends I bid you, Au revoir

**Mary Gaerty,  
President**



## Consumer News

Ms Joyce Borg, Director General, Consumer Affairs, during the ceremony Service with a Smile 2016 Award spoke on the work carried out by the Office for Consumer Affairs within the MCCA, saying that besides safeguarding consumers' rights, the office also helps businesses in ensuring that they are aware of their legal responsibilities towards consumers. This is mainly done through regular meetings with the business community and also by offering training on consumer-related legislation to businesses and their employees. The winners of Service with a Smile 2016 award were Smart Supermarket placed first, followed by Pavi and Pama Supermarkets in second and third place respectively. The Hon Minister Helena Dalli in her opening address spoke about the importance of a good quality service to consumers. She also emphasised that local sellers should offer their products and services online.

**NCW wishes to congratulate Ms Josephine Borg (Ms), DPA for her recent appointment as Director General (Consumer Affairs), office for Consumer Affairs, MCCA**







## National Council of Women Vice President Amy Camilleri Zahra honoured by the U.S. Embassy

The Ambassador of the United States for Malta, G. Kathleen Hill awarded NCW Vice President Amy Camilleri Zahra a very prestigious award during a reception held in September. The Embassy for the United States of America selected Ms Camilleri Zahra for the award of "Ambassador's Woman of Courage" for her efforts in promoting the rights of people with disabilities and particularly the rights of women with disabilities, who suffer from double discrimination as both women and as disabled persons. The National Council of Women would like to congratulate Ms Amy Camilleri Zahra and would also like to thank her for her contribution towards an inclusive society.

## Ing. Helga Pizzuto appointed Chair of Malta Competition and Consumer Affairs Authority



The National Council of Women would like to congratulate Ing. Helga Pizzuto on her new appointment, as Chair of Malta Competition and Consumer Affairs Authority. We wish her every success within her new role.



## Dr Martine Cassar appointed as Commissioner for Refugees

Dr Martine Cassar has been appointed as the new Commissioner for Refugees by Prime Minister Joseph Muscat, in consultation with Minister for Home Affairs and National Security Hon Carmelo Abela.

Prior to her appointment, Dr. Cassar headed the office of an International Organisation based in Malta for over two years. She graduated as a lawyer from

the University of Malta in 2008, and specialised in International Humanitarian Law (IHL) and Human Rights at the Academie De Droit International Humanitaire et de Droits Humains in Geneva. For over the past five years, she has been active in the field of migration, refugee law, and counter trafficking.

Dr Cassar is the third Commissioner for Refugees and the first woman to be occupying

the post since the office was set up in 2002. The Office of the Refugee Commissioner, headed by the Refugee Commissioner, is responsible for receiving the processes and determining applications for international protection in Malta as stipulated by the Refugees Act. It will also be providing support where necessary in the upcoming EU Presidency, which will be hosted by Malta and which will start in January 2017.

## Commissioner for Children Ms Pauline Miceli



Pauline Miceli has been appointed Commissioner for Children, succeeding Helen D'Amato.

Ms Miceli is a former head of school, the deputy chairperson of the Employment and Training Corporation and a former Labour councillor on Naxxar Local Council. She has published two collections of children's stories and another book about women.

## The European Pillar of Social Rights: reinforcing Europe's social dimension



*Ivan Ebejer, Economist, European Commission Representation in Malta*

**T**he impact left by the crisis on the EU's economy and society both in terms of growth and social implications as well as the long-term challenges facing Europe underline the need for strengthening the social dimension.

The costs of the crisis go beyond falling or low economic growth. Perhaps more important, the crisis has had severe and visible effects on Europe's society. Unemployment, in particular, has been taking a very heavy toll on individuals for many years: almost 22 million persons are still out of work and looking for a job in Europe (close to 17 million in the euro area), of which 10 million have been doing so for more than a year. Moreover, a significant share of the EU's population is at risk of poverty, public finances have been stretched, and national performances have diverged markedly.

The crisis has also partly hidden some and accentuated other more fundamental long-term trends. Among these are, for instance, changes in societal structures, family and work patterns; longer and more varied working lives; a more diverse workforce and the spread of new forms of work; the paradox between rising levels of education and widespread skills mismatches; increased inequalities; new needs and opportunities emerging from progress in life expectancy and demographic ageing; technological change and the digitisation of society and the economy.

The best performing Member States in economic terms are those which developed more ambitious and efficient social policies, not just

as a result of economic development, but as a central part of their growth model. Key to this is the design of welfare systems and labour market institutions fulfilling their role and supporting job creation.

To address the current and future challenges and ensure a better functioning economic and monetary union, the European Commission has put forward a number of essential principles common to euro area Member States in the field of employment and social policies. The so-called European Pillar of Social Rights groups 20 principles under three main headings:

**a. Equal opportunities and access to the labour market:**

This includes skills development, life-long learning and active support for employment. All these elements are all indispensable to increase employment opportunities, facilitate transitions between different employment statuses and improve the employability of individuals.

**b. Fair working conditions:**

Needed to establish an adequate and reliable balance of rights and obligations between workers and employers. They make sure that there is evenness between flexibility and security to facilitate job creation, job take-up and the adaptability of firms, and promoting social dialogue.

**c. Adequate and sustainable social protection:**

This includes access to health, social protection benefits and high quality services, including childcare, healthcare and long-term care, which are essential to ensure a dignified living and protection against life's risks. This enables citizens to participate fully in employment and, more generally, in society.

On issues related specifically to gender, while recognising that inequalities continue to be a concern in the labour market, the Pillar proposes three specific principles. Amongst others the principles target equal treatment and the need for addressing barriers to female participation and segregation, access to leave arrangements and care services and flexible working arrangements. One should note that the principles in the remaining

headings are also relevant to gender issues due to their cross-cutting nature.

The European Commission is following up on the publication of the Pillar by an extensive consultation exercise to gather views and feedback from stakeholders in each Member State – from national authorities to social partners and citizens. On 2 September, the European Commission Representation in Malta organised a conference in which Maltese social partners and civil society were invited to provide their input on how they view the future shape of the Pillar. In addition, anyone can submit their feedback on the Pillar to the Commission (by following the web link below) by 31 December 2016. This consultation would eventually form the basis for the Commission to put forward a final proposal for the Pillar early in 2017.

When finalised, the Pillar should build on, and complement, the EU's social "acquis" in order to guide policies in a number of fields essential for well-functioning and fair labour markets and welfare systems. The principles proposed do not replace existing rights, but offer a way to assess and, in the future, approximate for the better the performance of national employment and social policies.

It is the Commission's firm belief that economic development should result in greater social progress and cohesion and that, while ensuring appropriate safety nets in line with European values, social policy should also be conceived as a productive factor, which reduces inequality, maximises job creation and allows Europe's human capital to thrive. Effective safety nets and incentives to access the labour market should enable people to live a decent life, change personal and professional statuses over the lifetime and make the most of their talent.

*More information on the European Pillar of Social Rights can be found at: [http://ec.europa.eu/priorities/deeper-and-fairer-economic-and-monetary-union/towards-european-pillar-social-rights\\_en](http://ec.europa.eu/priorities/deeper-and-fairer-economic-and-monetary-union/towards-european-pillar-social-rights_en)*



## NCW Consultation Recommendations on Gender Violence and Domestic Violence Act Legislation



**N**ew and more rigorous legislation is required to deal with repeated punishable acts directed by men against women with whom they

had a close relationship; this should also cover children and closely related persons. This new offence makes it possible for the court to increase the penal value of the above acts in situations where they are part of a process and which therefore make it possible to take the entire situation of the abused woman into account as it constitutes a violation of the woman's integrity.

**A gender neutral language in the Penal Code** is important especially in cases of assault and sexual crimes  
**Provisions on sexual harassment in working life**

Women going through court procedures related to domestic violence need to find gainful employment to be

able to overcome financial problems. Besides the need for training to go back to work, these women need protection at the workplace as they can easily become victims of another form of violence

### **Treatment methods for men**

The new law makes it compulsory for perpetrators of violence to undergo treatment. Therefore there is the need to study existing methods of treatment for men and ascertain what methods are suitable and effective. Knowledge of the causes of male violence should be taken into account when evaluating these methods. Supportive work among men should be encouraged. Organisations run by men with the aim to further develop ways and means including information to men about violence against women could be given financial support by government.

### **Youth**

It is especially important to reach out to youth on questions concerning violence against women. Gender Violence among youth is on the

increase. Young people are vulnerable and through the education system, projects can be developed to create awareness and skill building among young people.

**To include also in the current Act** Trafficking of Women for Sexual Exploitation or clear reference to any Maltese legislation in existence (reference to the UN Palermo Protocol)  
**Reference to The Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combatting violence against women and domestic violence (Istanbul 11.5.2011)**

The Gender-Based Violence and Domestic Violence Act (currently under consultation) should clearly reflect and include the text of the following Articles in the CoE Convention

**Article 37 - Forced Marriage**

**Article 38 - Female Genital Mutilation**

**Article 39 Forced abortion and Sterilisation**

**Article 41 -Aiding, abetting and attempt**

## TTIP: State of Play and Future

Meusac in collaboration with H.E. Kathleen Hill, Ambassador of the United States to Malta, organised a discussion on TTIP: State of Play and Future held at the Aula Magna, University of Malta, Valletta Campus 14 October 2016

The discussion was introduced by Dr Vanni Xuerb, Head MEUSAC who gave an overview of the current state of play of the negotiations between EU different stakeholder and their counterparts in the US

In her opening speech, H.E.G. Kathleen Hill, Ambassador for the United States to Malta highlighted the importance of the EU and the US reaching agreement now, for both the EU and the US to take a leading role in raising the global level of shared values

Keynote speech was delivered by Dr Eliza Patterson, an attorney specializing in international trade law and policy. Three areas were highlighted: access to market; regulatory co-operation and standards which were dealt with in detail

As regards to the future, Dr Patterson's

views that although final agreement may not be reached during the Obama administration, with US elections early in November, it is hoped that negotiations will go on, although one cannot predict the direction they will take, whatever the outcome of the US Presidential elections will be. Other important areas discussed were on how the BREXIT will affect UK, the EU member states and US EU Trade relations

Mr Stefano Mallia, Member of the European Economic and Social Committee, (EESC) moderated the Panel discussion. Panelists included Dr Roberta Metsola MEP ( who gave a video message), Dr Alfred Sant, MEP, Mr David Sammut (Director International Economic Relations, Ministry of Finance), Dr Tanya Sciberras Camilleri, President Am-Cham Malta and Dr Eliza Patterson, keynote speaker

The interactive discussion with the members of the public dealt with several areas including agriculture, climate change, environment, data regulation, health, dispute settlement, the power of

multinationals and SMEs among others. It was noted that the panel did not include a representative of Consumers to ensure a balance of views in the discussion, to reflect what the TransAtlantic Consumer Dialogue (TACD) is proposing in the negotiations, as one of the key stakeholders in the negotiations. The role of Trade Unions responsible for employees and how the latter will be affected by this Trade Agreement was also addressed. Finally access to information and not least via EU websites to ensure transparency is crucial for ordinary citizens to be able to assess developments of negotiations and be in a position to make their voice heard

**Grace Attard,  
NCW Vice-President**



## UN International Day of Older Persons, 1st October: Take a Stand Against Ageism!



**New UN convention needed to adequately protect older persons' human rights and combat ageism in Europe**

**The 2016 UN International Day of Older Persons 'takes a stand against ageism' and calls on everyone to rethink our views and attitudes towards the older generation. To mark that day, a joint event at the European Parliament highlighted the pervasiveness of ageism and opened the dialogue for an international convention on the rights of older persons at EU level.**

*'I don't want special protection, but I do want the same protection from the law as anyone else.'*

This quote from the Declaration of Rights of Older People in Wales is largely shared by older people's organisations across Europe. They do not claim special treatment, new or more rights than others, but want to **make sure that their inherent rights do no diminish or become of less importance with age.**

Yet, older people encounter particular challenges in the realisation of their inalienable human rights, as the recent UN Independent Expert's findings confirmed. Ms. Kornfeld-Matte

further called on Member States to consider the elaboration of a new UN convention for this group. 'Elder-burden' is an expression that frequently comes up in the media and older workers are often perceived as lacking digital skills and flexibility, as e.g. a recent survey by the Belgian center for equal opportunities UNIA recently revealed for Belgium. These are just some examples of the flourishing stereotypes linked to old age in many areas of life. According to the findings of the European Social Survey <sup>1</sup> ageism is the most frequently experienced form of discrimination.

**'Ageism is an erosion of human rights'**, highlighted Anne-Sophie Parent, Secretary-General of AGE Platform Europe, at a joint event organised by AGE, the European Network of National Human Rights Institutions (ENNHRI) and the EPP group of the European Parliament on 28 September. Building on the *'assumption that older people's lives are less worthy and that old age means decline and uselessness'*, ageism leads to degrading treatment of older people and limits older persons' potential, impacts their health and well-being and hinders their contributions to social, economic, cultural and political life, as Ms Parent explained.

Structural ageism is largely tolerated by our societies; those same societies which in parallel acknowledge the necessity of increasing older people's social and economic participation in order to address the rapid ageing of the European population. Isn't this schizophrenic?

The United Nations and the World Health Organisation are leading worldwide campaigns against ageism. However, as AGE Secretary-General noted, despite an

increasing number of resolutions of the European Parliament recognizing the particular human rights challenges faced by the older population, the **European Union to date has not paid any particular attention to ageism** and older people's rights are not adequately addressed in its work programme.

**'Making the fight against ageism a policy priority would definitively bring more coherence and efficiency to EU policies addressing demographic change'**, added Anne-Sophie Parent.

Although a number of binding international and regional human rights conventions protect the human rights of all individuals, those treaties do not specifically address age discrimination or protect older persons' rights systematically or comprehensively. ENNHRI, the European Network of National Human Rights Institutions, is conducting an EU-funded project, which includes NHRIs' monitoring of the human rights situation of older people in long-term care across several European countries.

*'We have identified some practices which could lead to breaches of human rights, for example the freedom of movement, right to privacy and to autonomy, as well as the right to the highest attainable standard of health. I am confident all the stakeholders will respond to our recommendations in their pursuit to improve the human rights situation of older persons in long term care'*, said Lora Vidović, Croatian Ombudswoman and ENNHRI chair.

'Even though human rights apply to all, the fact that older persons are not explicitly referred to in the treaties might represent a challenge to their protection, which could be strengthened with a Convention on the Human Rights of Older Persons', concluded Lora Vidović.

<sup>1</sup> [1] Ageism in Europe – Findings from the European Social Survey: [http://www.ageuk.org.uk/Documents/EN-GB/For-professionals/ageism\\_across\\_europe\\_report\\_interactive.pdf?dtrk=true](http://www.ageuk.org.uk/Documents/EN-GB/For-professionals/ageism_across_europe_report_interactive.pdf?dtrk=true)





**NCW Delegates meet Comisiones Vera Jourova**



**WOW Mentoring Session**

**Anna Lindh Foundation Meeting at the Mediterranean Conference**





*MCVO Training Conference*



**Mediterranean Forum  
Conference Centre, Malta**



*11 Woman Affairs Ministers Meeting in Samoa*



## No violence against children is acceptable, all violence is preventable



**Strasbourg 20/09/2016**

The following are the main conclusions of the 2016 UN Global study on violence against children.

### **Children have the right to a life free from violence**

States have an obligation, enshrined in international law, to protect children from violence. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child guarantees the right for children to be free from violence, including “physical and mental violence, injury and abuse, neglect and negligent treatment, maltreatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse”. The European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR), which prohibits all forms of torture, inhuman and degrading treatment (Article 3), applies to children as well as to adults. The case-law of the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR) regarding violence against children clearly establishes that states have a positive duty to take effective measures to protect children from abuse.

The Council of Europe also adopted the Istanbul Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence and the Lanzarote Convention on the Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse.

### **Violence against children remains widespread**

Violence against children is

still too often considered socially acceptable and tolerated in Europe today.

After escaping violence in their home countries, in 2016 refugee children have again had to face physical and psychological violence in Europe’s refugee camps, detention facilities or next to closed borders. Migrant children, especially those who travel unaccompanied, are also particularly vulnerable to sexual abuse, trafficking and exploitation. Yet they are often left insufficiently protected by child protection and other public services in countries of transit or refuge.

Perhaps less known is the fate of children affected by the conflict in Eastern Ukraine. During my visit to this country in March 2016, I learnt that in 2015 more than 20 children were killed and 40 were injured as a result of the conflict. About 200 000 of the 580 000 children living in non-government controlled areas, close to the front line, are in need of psychosocial support to alleviate post-traumatic stress disorders. Mines and unexploded ordnance represent a major threat for the safety of these children. More than 215 000 children have also been displaced to other parts of the country and many live in precarious conditions.

In my work over the last four years, I also found that children in state care, especially those in institutions, can be exposed to high levels of violence. In a report I published in 2014 following a

visit to Romania, I referred to reported abuses of institutionalised children with disabilities, including “slapping; choking; beatings with fists, knees and a cane; crushing the children’s fingers using a door; sexual abuse; and no access to toilets at night time.”

Children with disabilities, in particular those with intellectual or psychosocial disabilities, whether institutionalised or not, are three to four times more likely to experience physical and sexual violence or neglect according to 2014 UNICEF research. It is clearly an under-reported problem, and children who complain face the risk of seeing their claims not taken seriously because of their disability, as highlighted by the European Union Fundamental Rights Agency in a 2015 report.

Racism and social exclusion also result in higher levels of violence against children belonging to minority groups, such as Roma children. The beating and humiliation to which a young Bulgarian Roma boy was subjected in April 2016, for having stated to his aggressor that he was an equal citizen, is a striking example of this. Moreover, forced housing evictions of Roma in various countries are often carried out with violence and leave children homeless and vulnerable to abuse, as I noted in letters addressed to seven member states in 2016. Rejection also affects LGBTI children who are bullied and subjected to violence at home, in schools and other contexts.

Austerity measures have also worsened the situation. During my visits to Portugal (2012), Estonia (2012), and the Netherlands (2014), I noted that increasingly difficult socio-economic circumstances and massive cuts in budgets allocated to supporting children and their families had led to higher risks of domestic violence towards children. They have also jeopardised the capacity of child protection services to detect and prevent violence. Additionally, in several countries children are left behind by parents



who go to work abroad. These children are at high risk of neglect and abuse.

Patterns of widespread abuse of children, notably in schools, have been uncovered in several countries. However, victims are still too often in need of adequate reparation and recognition of the harm done to them. In 2014 for example, the ECtHR found Ireland in breach of the ECHR for having failed to protect the applicant from sexual abuse at school but also for the fact that she was unable to have this failure recognised at national level.

### **Violence in the circle of trust**

Armed conflicts, displacement and poverty are far from being the only context for the occurrence of violence. In fact, most violence occurs in different settings of children's daily life, including their families and close social environment. Thus, the Lanzarote Committee, in charge of monitoring the implementation of the above-mentioned Lanzarote Convention, has focused its first round of monitoring precisely on sexual abuse of children in the circle of trust. In 70-85% of cases of sexual violence on children, perpetrators are known to the child victim.

Moreover, it is still considered in parts of Europe that violence is required to educate children. As of 2016, 18 member states of the Council of Europe still had to achieve full prohibition of corporal punishment in all settings, including the home. In 2015, the European Committee of Social Rights found five member states to be in violation of the European Social Charter for failing to achieve such a prohibition.

### **Violence in the digital environment**

Children are increasingly exposed to violence through the Internet. They risk coming into contact with illegal or harmful content, including pornography, and content inciting substance abuse, suicide and other forms of self-harm. The Internet is also used by predators to contact children under false identities with a view to abusing them. Moreover, children can themselves become perpetrators and inflict harm on others, notably by bullying other children on social media.

### **Violence against children has a high cost for society**

It has multiple consequences on the lives of children, including on their social development, health status –present and future- and education level. Moreover, children exposed to violence are more likely to adopt violent behaviour, thus perpetuating violence across generations.

It is therefore important that ending violence against children is included among the United Nations 2030 sustainable development goals, an acknowledgment that this phenomenon is a serious factor hindering development that requires resolute action by governments. In 2016, the UN initiated a global partnership against violence. Tackling violence against children is also one of the priorities in the Council of Europe Strategy for the rights of the child (2016-2021).

Recognition of the problem is a necessary first step but a stronger political commitment by member states is necessary to protect children from violence in all settings.

### **What should states do to protect children from violence?**

- ratify the Lanzarote and Istanbul conventions.
- improve collection of data on violence against children, including through regular qualitative and quantitative research.
- promote a culture of respect for children's rights.
- provide adequate support to families so as to prevent domestic violence, the separation of families and the institutionalisation of children.
- adopt a response to violence that reflects its multidimensional nature. The Council of Europe has elaborated Policy guidelines which provide detailed guidance on the type of policies and mechanisms that should be put in place to effectively protect children from violence. They include:
- adopting national strategies with effective monitoring and evaluation mechanisms;
- adopting and enforcing legislation prohibiting all forms of violence against children in

all settings;

- establishing child-friendly mechanisms where children can report violence safely and in confidence;
- ensuring that effective and child-friendly remedies are available to children victims of violence, including child-friendly justice and institutions such as children's rights ombudspersons.
- boosting the capacity of child protection services to detect and deal with violence; imposing a duty on professionals in contact with children to report suspected abuse.

Moreover, member states should:

- take effective action to stop the use of violence against migrant and refugee children and their families, notably at borders; provide protection to children at risk of trafficking, in line with the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings; ensure the availability for unaccompanied migrant children of guardianship; stop detaining migrant children.
  - provide children in care with effective complaint mechanisms and accessible remedies; ensure that independent monitoring of all institutions is regularly carried out; implement deinstitutionalisation strategies.
  - take steps to improve the protection of children on the Internet, by enhancing their knowledge about risks for their safety on the Internet and providing them with human rights education.
  - provide reparation and justice to victims of large-scale child abuse.
  - set up tools to provide victims of violence with rehabilitation. Positive practices exist, such as the Children's houses model in which children victims of sexual violence can get a multi-disciplinary response that meets their needs.
- If we want children to become peaceful citizens who are respectful of human rights and democratic values, we must stop tolerating violations of their rights and create conditions for them to grow free from violence.

**Nils Muiznieks**

## Commonwealth Women's Affairs Ministers Meeting



The 11th Commonwealth Women's Affairs Ministers Meeting (11WAMM) was held in Apia, Samoa, 7-8 September 2016. Delegations from 14 member countries attended the meeting.

The opening ceremony was addressed by the Deputy Prime Minister of the Independent State of Samoa, Honourable Fiaame Naomi Mata'afa, and the Commonwealth Secretary-General, Rt. Honourable Patricia Scotland. The meeting was chaired by Hon Faimalotoa Kika Iemaima Stowers, Minister for Women, Community and Social Development (Samoa). The keynote address at the opening of the business meeting, was made by Her Excellency, Ambassador Natasha Stott Despoja AM (Australia).

Theme of the meeting was "Gender Equality through Sustainable Development in an Inclusive Commonwealth".

11WAMM took place almost a year after the adoption by the Commonwealth member states and the rest of the world of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, as well as the Paris Agreement at COP21. In pursuance of the 2030 Agenda and SDGs, Ministers reiterated that realizing gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls is critical and will make an essential contribution to progress across all the 17 SDGs and 169 targets. They also noted the importance of systematic mainstreaming of a gender perspective in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda is crucial.

11WAMM focused on the contribution that the Commonwealth can make towards the achievement of the SDGs, with an emphasis on promoting gender equality and women's empowerment across the 2030 Agenda.

Ministers noted the 2015 Commonwealth Heads of Government Malta Communiqué, reaffirming that **gender equality and empowerment of all women and girls** should be mainstreamed into development, and reaffirmed their commitment to prioritising the issue in line with **the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development** and within the work of the Commonwealth Secretariat.

Ministers welcomed the **Report from Senior Officials** and noted the recommendations in the report of the End Term Review (ETR) of the Commonwealth Plan of Action on Gender Equality 2005-2015 (known as the PoA). They further noted the importance of the ETR in informing the future direction of Commonwealth's priorities on gender equality.

Ministers welcomed the establishment of the Commonwealth Women's Forum (Malta, November, 2015), acknowledged the contribution made by the Forum, the Women Leaders' Summit (London, July, 2016) and the National Women's Machineries in the determination of the next Commonwealth priorities on gender equality and empowerment.

Ministers agreed to four priority areas for action:

- (i) Women's economic empowerment;
- (ii) Women in leadership;
- (iii) Ending violence against women and girls; and
- (iv) Gender and climate change. 3

Ministers agreed that the implementation of the four priorities may vary for different member governments and requested the Secretariat coordinate with member governments to identify their focus areas.

Ministers requested that the Commonwealth Secretariat provides an Implementation Strategy for 2017-2020 and develop a monitoring and evaluation mechanism that uses the reporting framework of the SDGs.

Ministers acknowledged the importance of accurate timely data and information, as well as clear targets, to underpin evidence based policy and monitoring.

Ministers recognised the critical importance of economic empowerment of women to the delivery of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and called for equitable access to resources for example land, property rights, information communication technology and finance.

Ministers agreed to continue the advocacy for increased numbers and effective participation of women in leadership at all levels of decision making in the private and public sectors.

Ministers welcomed the continuing efforts to end violence against women and girls, including the prevention and elimination of child, early and forced marriage, female genital mutilation and other harmful traditional practices. They noted studies

which estimate the costs of violence against women/gender based violence (GBV) are essential. These results can be factored into national macro-economic assessments and policies.

Ministers acknowledged and recognised the disproportionate impact of climate change on women and girls and committed to engage in mitigation and adaptation initiatives, including disaster preparedness, response, recovery and related measures to build resilience in Commonwealth countries.

Ministers confirmed the importance of strong legal frameworks to prevent discrimination against women and girls including the incorporation of international agreements into domestic regulatory frameworks and policies.

Ministers welcomed the launch of two publications prepared by the Commonwealth Secretariat – *Advancing Gender Equality-Case Studies from Across the Commonwealth* and the *Judicial Bench Book on violence against women in East Africa*, and recognised the importance of working in partnership with the judiciary across the Commonwealth to enhance best practices.

Ministers noted the best practices and lessons learnt of Commonwealth partners to promote gender equality and encouraged development partners and member countries to build on existing successful partnerships, as well as to launch innovative new ones, to advance gender equality and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Ministers committed to the principle of inclusion and recognised the importance of working with all groups, including civil society and private sector, in their efforts to implement commitments to gender equality at all levels.

Ministers noted the importance of utilising all available resources for implementation of agreed priorities. They acknowledged the importance of engaging with national, regional, and international partners to mobilise and leverage resources to support member states' efforts to promote gender equality.

Ministers thanked the Government of Samoa for successfully hosting 11WAMM. Ministers welcomed and confirmed Kenya as the host of 12WAMM in 2019.

**8 September 2016  
Apia, Samoa**



## Mentoring Session for London Schoolgirls

Women of the world celebrate the UN International Day of the Girl



October 11 marked the UN International Day of the Girl, an opportunity to empower the future generation of women, celebrating their potential and enabling them to succeed, while demanding a world where girls and boys have equal opportunities.

The annual event, hosted by the Southbank Centre, started in the morning with an 8am mass speed mentoring session on the London Eye, seeing 250 London schoolgirls paired with 250 inspirational female mentors from a wide range of industries, everything from film to engineering, politics to sport, activism to fashion. Doris Bingley was one of the mentors.

Each girl was matched at random with three different mentors in her capsule and had three 15-minute mentoring sessions during two complete rotations of the London Eye. Among the mentors were some influential faces, including Juliet Stevenson, Lily Cole, Kelly Hoppen, Sara Pascoe, Mary Portas, Helen Pankhurst, Cherie Booth, Jo Brand and Sharmadean Reid – and, for

the first time in the event's history, female politicians from six major political parties, giving the girls political role models they could actually relate to.

For the rest of the day, the schoolgirls, aged 11-18 and coming from 30 different schools, were invited to attend an inspirational afternoon of creative workshops, debates, discussions and performances at Southbank Centre. Covering the subject of female leadership and how to make a change, however big or small, the day was an unforgettable one, with Caitlin Moran bringing the celebrations to a close in the Royal Festival Hall, presenting her 'Moranifesto For Girls', empowering the young girls to be fearless and change the future.

## Statement to mark the International Day of the Girl

October 11th 2016  
The International Council of Women is committed to working for the rights of the Girl and in so doing supports this year's theme, *Girl's Progress = Goal's Progress: A Global Girl Data Movement*, which focuses on measuring, understanding and targeting the unique obstacles faced by girls under eighteen so as to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030

It is the right of all girls, regardless of what walk of life they come from, to be treated with dignity and have equal opportunities. It is their right to have the freedom to play and enjoy life as a child, to be free from all forms of discrimination and harmful practices, including hard labour from an early age. It is their right to live free from fear of all forms of violence, including harassment, sexual violence, early marriage, genital mutilation and food taboos. Above all, it is their right to receive an education and freely express

views in all matters affecting them.

ICW-CIF calls on Governments not only to ensure they have signed and ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and the Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, but also to have legislation in place supporting these conventions, so that girls are protected and have equality. We strongly recommend governments to follow the lead of the European Union in including the rights of the child as a fundamental human right. No girl should have to suffer harm from the hands of traffickers, paedophiles and such, who should be punished as criminals. They should also have access to good health care, including teen pregnancy and sexually transmitted disease.

Governments are urged to ensure that quality education is available for all girls from primary age. Primary education opens the world

to girls, giving them the opportunity to further education and/or training so that girls' potentials are realized and they go on to take their place in society as equals and to play an important part, as women, in shaping their respective communities and countries.

We strongly urge governments to enhance the gathering of disaggregated data on girls in all areas so that they can identify and understand the plight faced by girls. Based on the data, governments can develop gender-sensitive policies, which in turn, allow them to target investment and actions to empowering girls to reach their full potential, thereby boosting national capacity.

For full implementation of the 2030 Agenda and, above all, for Human Dignity to be achieved, it is essential for the Girl to be fully integrated into society as an equal.

**Jung Sook Kim**  
ICW President

## EU Commissioner for Justice, Consumers and Gender Equality, Vera Jourova consultation meeting with National Council of Women representatives



**T**he National Council of Women represented by President Mary Gaerty, General Secretary Doris Bingley and Vice-President Grace Attard were invited for an exchange of views with Commissioner Jourova on the current situation of gender Equality in the EU and in Malta. Also present were representatives of MCWO and LGBTI.

In her introductory statement, Commissioner Jourova spoke about the new initiative of the European Commission to modernize and adapt the current policy regarding female labour market participation which is still low linked to women who are taking over care responsibilities. Outlining her plans for better options to balance work and care responsibilities including affordable childcare, she praised Malta's initiatives of free child care and other measures that encourage women to join and remain in the labour market. She also commented on the lack of flexibility of working time and the absence of incentives for men, such as paid paternity leave to take more care responsibilities in their families.

The discussion opened up various shortcomings regarding equality. While female labour market

participation in the EU was 63.5% in 2014, which is 11.5% below the Europe 2020 agenda target of 75% for men and women, in Malta, currently the rate of female employment is still very low at 53.6% against 81.4% for men.

The contribution of women to the economy must be prioritized. The recent World Economic Forum report on Gender Equality placed Malta as the worst country in Europe. According to Eurfound data, the estimated costs of the gender employment gap amount to more than 300bn Euros per year (or 2.5% of the current EU GDP). The issue of women on boards, a topic that was highly controversial in Malta less than two years ago is still unresolved. More women than men are in undeclared work.

There is a lack of female researchers and it is still very difficult for female graduates to combine work and family responsibilities and often have to opt for lower paid jobs. Women work fewer hours than men or take a one-year break after giving birth. All these barriers are reflected in women's lower pensions entitlement and increased risk of poverty. Measures to address gender issues in employment must offer incentives to both fathers and mothers as otherwise we are still re-enforcing a culture of discrimination.

Other issues raised concerned the lack of political empowerment of women, where women often face harsh criticism and sexism on social media, online hate speech and abusive language. The Commission is currently working with social media companies to limit hate speech on the internet. This also concerns LGBTI individuals and the difficulties they face to integrate in society. In very strong words, Commissioner Jourova spoke about domestic violence and the fact that many women tend not to report. She will be launching a campaign towards the end of this year which will be taken up during Malta's Presidency in the first half of 2017.

**Grace Attard,  
NCW Vice-President**

## ACHIEVEMENT OF PEACEFUL CO-EXISTENCE BETWEEN DIFFERENT FAITHS AND CULTURES IN THE MEDITERRANEAN REGION

**T**he European Centre of the International Council of Women meeting in Northern Cyprus at the invitation of the National Council of Turkish Women is appalled at the sufferings of innocent women and children caught up in the conflicts affecting the region.

We believe these abhorrent events to be caused by the struggle of different religions to gain ascendancy over these territories and to impose their fanatical interpretation of religion on helpless populations. The result is misery for all who are caught up in these events and an exodus of many thousands of people fleeing the area and risking their lives by crossing the Mediterranean to reach a place of safety.

Most of the dead and injured in these wars are

women and children. We vehemently protest at this slaughter and believe that the only way to achieve peace now and for the future is to replace religious intolerance with secular societies.

Many such societies already exist elsewhere in the world and are examples of harmonious existence between peoples of all faiths.

We call upon the international community to do all in its power to achieve this end by advocating secularism throughout the world and upon the United Nations to commence this process by summoning a conference of all interested parties in a neutral country to promote the establishment of secular societies with all possible speed.

**Cosima Schenk & Monica Tolman**



# DIARY OF EVENTS

## July

- 5th Public Consultation Seminar on the white paper 2016 amendments to the Voluntary Organisation Law Mary Gaerty, Doris Bingley and Marie Demicoli attended
- 6th Celebrations of 240 anniversary of the Independence of the USA Mary Gaerty attended
- 7th Online discussion for data collection on femicide, rape and intimate partner violence EIGE meeting at the Meridien, Mary Gaerty attended
- 8th Connect from the Heart March Executive Committee Meeting
- 9th Participation in discussion Programm at Dar Centrali PN, Mary Gaerty participated
- 11th Lifelong Learning Courses Seminar Marie Demicoli attended  
MCESD meeting, Mary Gaerty attended
- 12th Women Entrepreneurship Meeting Mary Gaerty, Doris Bingley and Grace Attard attended
- 13th English Conversation Course at NCW centre  
Commonwealth Women Leaders Summit. Doris Bingley participated
- 14th Commonwealth Women Leaders Summit. Doris Bingley participated
- 18th Managing Migration Progress so far: The Road ahead seminar at Dar l-Ewropa Valetta
- 19th Consumer Rights Information Session
- 20th Mary Gaerty, Doris Bingley and Rebecca Wellman attended the Parliamentary Social Affairs and Family Affairs and Health Committee discussing the MAP
- 22nd Egyptian Reception Mary Gaerty and Doris Bingley attended
- 27th Information Session on Civil Society Fund Grants Therese Cassola attended  
Mary Gaerty, Doris Bingley and Rebecca Wellman attended the Parliamentary Social Affairs and Family Affairs and Health

- Committee discussing the MAP
- 28th European eCompetence framework Seminar
- Approaching the MEDIA session
- Farewell reception for HE Rob Luke, British High Commissioner, Mary Gaerty, Doris Bingley and Marie Demicoli attended

## August

- 4th From Rome to Lisbon and Beyond the Erasmus Generation in Power
- 17th Meeting with Mr Spiteri Gingell
- 18th MEUSAC Life Programme Consultation Session
- 22nd Meeting with Tutor of the Gender Awareness Course
- 24th Invited on Radio Malta 1 Doris Bingley and Marie Demicoli attended  
Empowerment Course  
Participants visit to Hilton Malta
- 26th Meeting at the Lifelong Learning Department with regards courses held at NCW Centre during the Scholastic year 2016/1017
- 30th Malta accession experience for the Republic of Serbia at MEUSAC. Doris Bingley attended  
Meeting at the Embassy for the United States together with Migrant Women Association Malta
- 31st Women Workers around the World organised by GWU

## September

- 1st Reception at San Anton hosted by The President of Malta. Doris Bingley and Therese Cassola attended.
- 2nd EU Commission Consultation on a European Pillar of Social Rights Mary Gaerty, Grace Attard and Doris Bingley attended
- 5th Jum il-Vittorja f'Misrah Assedju Mary Gaerty attended
- 14th Anna Lindt Foundation Launch of the Mediterranean Forum 2016 Doris Bingley and Mary Gaerty attended

- 15th SESBA & Network for Social and Market Inclusion through language EDUCATION  
American Ambassador award ceremony in honour of Amy Camilleri Zahra. Mary Gaerty, Grace Attard Doris Bingley and Therese Cassola attended
- 17th Launch of a Public Consultation on the implementation of the Istanbul  
Convention Mary Gaerty, Doris Bingley and Grace Attard attended
- 19th Digital Malta Consultation workshop  
Launch of 2016 SME week "Women means Business"  
Meeting with HSBC Representative  
Executive and Central Committee meetings  
Enterprise Consultative Council meeting, Mary Gaerty attended
- 23rd M C V S Conference  
Strengthening Voluntary Work Doris Bingley and Marie Demicoli attended
- 24th M C V S Conference  
Strengthening Voluntary Work Doris Bingley attended
- 26th Business Breakfast – Ministry of Finance at the Casino Maltese Valletta Doris Bingley attended  
MCVS meeting with Mr Wojciech, Secretary of State at the Chambers of Poland's PM. Doris Bingley attended.
- The 67th Anniversary of the Founding of the Peoples' Republic of China Mary Gaerty and Doris Bingley invited
- 28th The Sustainable Development Goals A Focus on Food and the Elimination of Poverty Doris Bingley and Marie Demicoli attended
- 30th Launching event of the European E-Platform on Women Entrepreneurship WEgate Brussels Mary Gaerty and Grace Attard attended  
End of Summer Barbecue organised by the National Council of Women at San Antonio Hotel. Members and friends attended

## Prayers of Remembrance for Past Members

During the month of November, the National Council of Women urges all members and friends to pray for our departed members. Let us acknowledge their generous and kind acts that they performed for the Council on behalf of Maltese women during their years as active members. As we reap the fruit of their visions and values, we pray that they have joined the Eternal Father in whose loving presence they will live forever.

### FORTHCOMING EVENTS:

#### Visit to the Manoel Theatre followed by tea on Friday 18th November 2016 at 4.00pm

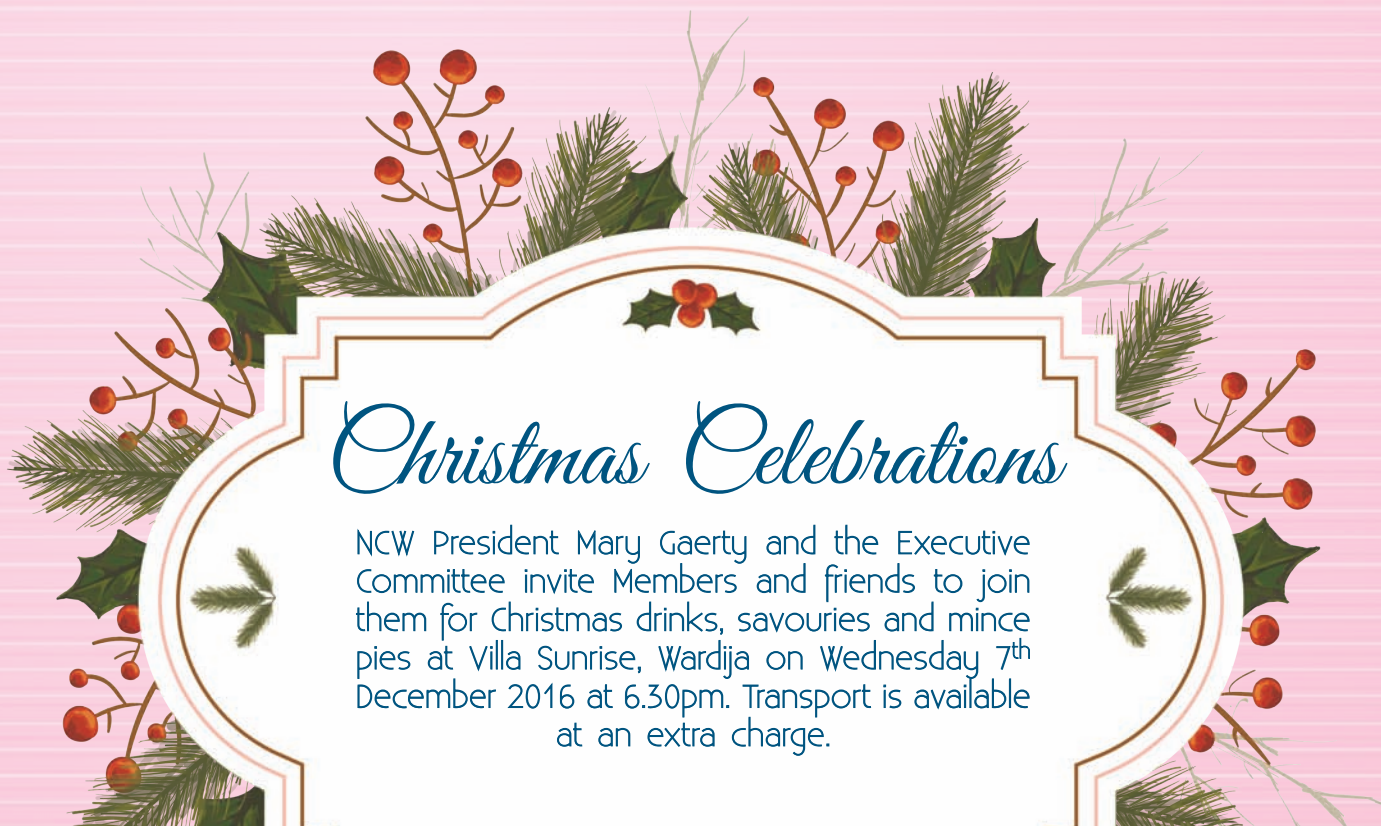
A tour of the Manoel Theatre starting from the Museum which depicts a rich outline of the glorious and interesting history of the theatre and then we proceed to the impressive baroque auditorium of what is one of the oldest working theatres in Europe. Tea at

#### First Aid Course at NCW Learning Centre in Blata l-Bajda

The National Council of Women with the support of the Voluntary Organisation Council would like to invite applicants to register for the First Aid Course which is being held every Wednesday at NCW Centre from Wednesday 12th October 2016 between 9.00am to 12.00pm. Ms Gemma Siroll from St John Ambulance Training Branch will conduct the sessions.

Registration is also open for the second course which will be held in November 2016. Courses are free of charge.

First Aid courses are recognized by The Malta Qualifications Council, and by local Occupational Health & Safety Regulations.



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)