



Resolutions

NCW Annual General Meeting

January 2018



National Council of Women

Affiliated to the International Council of Women

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Foreword

As in previous years, the National Council of Women together with its Affiliated Organisations is presenting a set of Resolutions, which were approved during its Annual General Meeting held on Saturday 27th January 2018.

These resolutions are meant to encourage discussion and urge the authorities to take note and necessary action to reform or introduce new legislation to encompass the needs that until recently were not identified or which have become a necessity.

Resolutions originate from the need for change, to introduce or improve a particular aspect or circumstance affecting not only women but any particular sector of society. The change, once effected, is meant to improve the quality of life of individuals and consequently of society at large.

It is with this ethos that these resolutions need to be analyzed.

Mary Gaerty
President
National Council of Women



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Documents

- a) NCW Exploratory Paper on The Future of Occupational Safety and Health in Europe: *Strengthening Social Europe through Healthier Workplaces for Safer Workers*
- b) The Gender Pay Gap and link to The Gender Pay Gap

Reaffirmation of Policy

1. Promoting Women's participation in the digital society - making women more visible in the Digital Society
2. The long-term care for ageing societies
3. The challenges of changing employment relations
4. Addressing precarious work



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1. Addressing Malta's demographic changes and new forms of work post 2020

Name of Organisation submitting the resolution – National Council of Women

Justification

Demographic changes are the dynamics in the quantifiable statistics of a given population. Demography seeks to understand population changes by investigating such demographic components as gender, age, ethnicity, home ownership, mobility, disabilities, language knowledge, employment status and location. The combination of low fertility and low mortality will bring significant change in the makeup of our population

Demography examines the relationship of changes through deaths, births and migration in demographic composition, with the natural environment and with social and economic change. Demographic indicators may include population size, crude birth rate, population growth rate, crude death rate, fertility rate, life expectancy and infant mortality. Estimated and projected gender and age distributions in relation to fertility rates could also be included. The impact of demographic change is considered as one of the most important challenges for the future.

These elements and how they change constitute vital information about the population of a given location and its culture. Demography examines the relationship of changes through deaths, births and migration in demographic composition, with the natural environment and with social and economic change. Demographic indicators may include population size, crude birth rate, population growth rate, crude death rate, fertility rate, life expectancy and infant mortality. The impact of demographic change is considered as one of the most important challenges for the future.

According to the Malta Employers Association (MEA) Position Paper on Malta's Demographic Challenges recently presented to the MCESD, the following economic and social aspects were pointed out

In spite of an increase in the activity rate and female participation, the domestic labour supply has failed to keep up with the sudden increase in demand due to the number of productive hours demanded and also partially owing to skills mismatches.

Consequently over the past decade, there has been an increase in foreign employees, 18% of the workforce being foreign in 2017. These employees – whether they are EU citizens or third country nationals – are now being seen as necessary to sustain economic growth, and thus the authorities are adopting a more open door policy to foreign employees, as labour shortages are prevalent across all economic sectors

The *social, environmental, employment, infrastructure impact* of these new demographic changes also need to be taken into consideration such as housing, rental rates, education systems: more students with different educational background levels, immigration from EU countries, Asia, North Africa etc which are also resulting in the increase of SMEs and jobs in the caring sector

Digitalisation and new forms of work.

Digital technology is playing an increasingly important role in our economy and social life. Digitalisation will change our working life dramatically. We have to ensure that the appropriate skills are available for the future, so that Malta remains competitive and is able to create new businesses and new jobs, people can remain integrated into the labour market throughout their entire working lives, and well-being for all is assured.

The speed at which digitalisation and automation happens also involves social risks which we have to deal with through the coordinated efforts of all stakeholders: decision makers, the social partners and civil society.

The changing nature of work and employment relations also needs to be taken in consideration. On-line platforms, crowd sourcing, economically dependent self-employed and other new forms of self-employment, issues relating to regulation of the activity of the intermediary, liability for accidents, damage and service failures need to be addressed to protect workers, consumers and the public at large.

There is a need for clarification of the applicability of existing EU regulations on safety and health at work for these new forms of employment, procedures for dealing with breaches of these regulations, responsibilities for inspection and for workers', consumers' and public liability insurance.

Work is also changing in traditional companies. In particular, knowledge-intensive work can take place in increasingly unconstrained conditions, which, on one hand, corresponds to a **desire for flexibility** expressed by many employees, but, on the other, can lead to increased intensification and burdens. An increasingly **multi-local working environment** requires new social competencies

Automation and **robots** will have a significant impact on the future of work. A significant number of **jobs** will be affected by the introduction of more robots into the workplace

Education systems

One of the most important questions is how to re-orient training and education, on the one hand, towards employers' needs and, on the other hand, towards higher and better employability, in a labour market environment characterised by a high degree of uncertainty and fast and unpredictable changes, and to adapt the content of training and education pathways for the upgrading and re-skilling of adult workers. This challenge affects employers and employees equally, forcing them to put more effort into forecasting, planning and strategy.

Recommendations

The speed at which digitalisation and automation happens also involves social risks which we have to deal with through the coordinated efforts of all stakeholders: decision makers, the social partners and civil society.

Future skills should match societal needs and the demands of the labour market. This can only be achieved through close cooperation between the social partners and public and private education systems. More volatile markets will give rise to challenges, as businesses and workers will have to adapt quickly enough. This, in particular, is a challenge for professional training systems.

Technical and social competencies, which comprise the ability to communicate and interact with people in different contexts and through different technical tools, as well as **entrepreneurial competencies** and a focus on responsibility towards society, are already a prerequisite, however, education systems need to deliver them in the context of the demographic changes we are witnessing in Malta

Lifelong learning, needs to plan ahead to address the diversity of human potential, particularly related to digital skills, which will be a necessity for everyone, requiring more and more flexibility from individuals, companies and all education and training systems.

Beyond formal education, much more time will have to be devoted to professional training and informal learning, which should be supported as much as possible by an EU-wide harmonised system of certificates and standards

Long-term developments, which may lead to new and unpredictable challenges where today's skills can quickly become obsolete, can best be dealt with by general education. The better the general education, the better the preparation for the unknown. A broad general education is also the best basis for learning how to single out reliable information on the internet and for becoming less vulnerable to fake news.

Competencies are a necessary prerequisite for transforming knowledge into results that increase our well-being - yet the digital age brings new challenges. Growing numbers of workers with atypical employment contracts frequently lack access to traditional, company-based training schemes.

To achieve enhanced learning experiences and outcomes of learning, the education system needs to place the learner at its centre: he/she is the one who should regulate his/her learning, training and upskilling. This would equip learners to become active, digital citizens, able to capitalise on the knowledge they acquired by controlling the nature, place, pace and timing of their learning in accordance with their views and values, and with values such as solidarity and respect for difference that are part of the European identity.

Digital tools play an important role in transforming and supporting teaching, which can result in the increased engagement of learners and improved results. As **educators and teachers** will have an increasingly important role to play, their competencies will have to adapt to new approaches, technologies and knowledge in the new education environment. Qualitative preparation of educators will, therefore, become key, as well as their status in terms of professional flexibility, remuneration, social

The fundamental role of social partners and collective bargaining, and the role of civil society, in general, in limiting the negative effects of these fast changes and in enhancing the positive aspects is a crucial aspect. The importance of social security for those in new forms of work, such as crowd workers, and of the new types of work environment; the relevance of

lifelong learning and the need of future skills must be at the forefront of national plans in dealing with the demographic challenges

Sources:

MEA Position Paper on Malta's Demographic Challenges;

EESC SOC 570 Future of work/skills

SOC 562 Skills and new forms of work



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2. The Role of Women in the Sustainable Development from a Maltese perspective

Name of Organisation submitting the resolution – National Council of Women

Justification

The Charter of the United Nations which came into force in 1981 stated that:
‘discrimination against women violates the principles of equality of rights and respect for human dignity, is an obstacle to the participation of women, on equal terms with men, in the political social, economic and cultural life of their countries, hampers the prosperity of society and the family and make it more difficult the full development of the potentialities of women in the service of their countries and of humanity’

- Gender Equality and sustainable social policies can maximize national economic return
- Strong economic growth rates can only be sustained by resorting to the development and implementation of sound strategies that address the long-term socio-economic situation in Malta
- Gender Equality is a fundamental right and necessary for the achievement of growth, employment and social cohesion
- Women’s Rights in the political and public sphere are going through difficult times.

The Commonwealth Priorities for Gender Equality - 2017-2020 and beyond

- The Commonwealth Priorities for Gender Equality 2017-2020 and Beyond were endorsed by Women’s Affairs Ministers at their 11th Meeting in Samoa in September 2016
- In November 2015, the Government of Malta hosted the inaugural Commonwealth Women’s Forum under the theme “Women Ahead Be all that You Can Be”
- The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) recognized that the realization of gender equality and empowerment of women and girls will crucially contribute to progress across all SDGs and targets.
- SDG 3 targeted gender disparity at all levels of education
- SDG 5 ‘Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls’ has taken into consideration discrimination, violence against women, harm practices, value of unpaid care and domestic work, women’s leadership in all spheres sexual and reproductive health, access to and control over economic resources, access to information and communication technology.

The European Commission

The proclamation of the European Pillar of Social Rights at the Social Summit on 17 November 2017 gives extra ownership of the Pillar to actors from the EU to the local level, as well as extra momentum to a series of employment and social affairs initiatives launched by the European Commission on the basis of the Pillar, which should materialise in the next eighteen months.

There is also a growing consensus across the EU that fostering equal opportunities is necessary to ensure that everyone can start well in life, overcomes difficulties and realise their own potential. Equal opportunities, equal pay, shared caring responsibilities between men and women and opportunities to develop and keep up with technological developments through lifelong learning and up-skilling: all this would help empowering individuals and build more resilient social structures that are able to adapt successfully over time

Sources: Social Agenda January 2018

More information: <http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?langId=en&catId=89&newsId=9003&furtherNews=yes>

The National Council of Women (1964 -) has been taking initiatives through research, training, policy formulation and practical measures as a Centre of Learning

In line with EU, Commonwealth and International policies NCW is working on the following priorities 2018-2020 and beyond

1. Women's economic empowerment
2. Women in leadership – political and economical
3. The gender pay gap
4. Ending violence against women and girls – (to be dealt with in a separate resolution)

Recommendations

General

- There is the need to not only defend our position for gender equality, by reacting but, times are requiring new ways to better equip ourselves to be pr-active in engaging more people more effectively
- developing new forms of communication about gender equality
- develop and disseminate new communication tools to engage with people at the level of values, and to build the skills and create the partnerships to do so coherently and effectively across all the different sectors that are concerned for gender equality.
- channeling substantive support to the work of all actors promoting equality for women, in particular women's rights defenders and national equality bodies, women's associations and partnership structures
- Enabling equality bodies to tackle all issues relevant to women's rights was also stressed by the FRA paper 'Challenges to women's human rights in the EU
- Improving data collection and the sharing of knowledge on all forms of discrimination and violence against women and girls to help decision makers better assess the impact of their laws and policies.

Women's economic empowerment.

Empowerment and education are key factors in addressing women's participation in the labour market

- Although the participation rate of women in the labour market has increased, in particular as a result of 'free childcare provision' there are still a number of *obstacles* that need to be addressed including:
 - Care for elderly family members
 - Care of family members with disability
 - Lack of retaining to re-enter the labour market
 - Lack of confidence in a labour market set-up that is becoming more IT oriented for older women
 - Lack of measures to ensure sharing of responsibilities by both parents that include amongst others
 - The need for flexible working hours for both men and women
 - Lack of tax incentives
 - Legal framework to regulate work in the hidden economy.
 - The need to give consideration to issues of women who fail to be part of the social security system as their work is undeclared and who are made vulnerable as a consequence
 - The need to address employment opportunities in new forms of work for women with disabilities
 - Pension Systems that provide incentives for women who have shorter and interrupted careers due to family responsibilities in various situation
- **Education**
 - Education is fundamental to achieving equal opportunities and in enabling women to achieve the positions of influence and decision making matching their skills, experience and talents on a par with men.
 - This encompasses the education we receive at home and how we are encouraged to fulfill their potential as early as nursery school where there should be opportunities to participate in a wide variety of activities which are appropriate to girls and boys (football –cooking).
 - It is not to lose what is intrinsic to being female but to ensure that our horizons are widened from the first opportunity

Recommendations

- Creating a safer online environment to counter the growing use of the internet and social media to abuse women and girls
- Ensuring that education at all levels challenges gender stereotyping and encourages women to reach their full potential
- Ensuring that women have equal access to lifelong learning and education both within employment and for self development
- Addressing the role of women in the Media and ICT
- Incentives and professional career guidance to increase the participation rates of girls and women in the STEM subjects and the IT sectors

Increasing the participation rate of women in economic decision-making

- The role of the private sector in employing women in decision-making posts is fundamental and one which requires a change of strategy

Recommendations

- There is the need for more long-term targets and not just short-term gain, that can be of economic benefit to business
- The rate of SMEs run by women is on the increase, as a result of campaigns, by Government and Women's NGOs and measures to attract more women to training for start-ups and retraining, however there are still a number of obstacles to be addressed
- Funding in the EU budget to be allocated to programmes supporting women's entrepreneurship, including SMEs created and led by women to ensure and encourage access for women to loans and equity finance.

Promoting equal participation of women and men in political decision-making *Measures that need to be taken/strengthened*

Political

- There is the need to look at what discourages women from entering the political arena and can it be changed.
- The hours kept by Parliament were designed for the days when men were the majority of elected MPs.
- Long hours and late night sittings are not conducive to women who are employed, have to look after the family and with family friendly measures that provide very little opportunity of men and women sharing family responsibilities.
- This calls for the introduction of 'normal working hours' for parliamentary business for all MPs

Social

- Although social attitudes have changed considerably in relation to 'women should stay at home', be paid less, not aspire to some things, there still exist considerable barriers.
- Perhaps the problems are more subtle and although individual women may have wider choices they are perhaps still constrained by barriers which are hard to tackle alone.
- More men take an active part in bringing up children but the assumption that it is still primarily a woman's role is reflected in personnel policies which continue to lag behind in terms of flexible working for men to complement women's working hours and family commitments be it children or caring for an older or disabled relatives
- There is still the perception that women/older women are not competent for certain leadership posts in politics and in the economy

Structural

- Introducing gender quotas in politics is still difficult. Gender quotas still encounter great resistance.
- Yet quotas are also seen as an efficient way of attaining real equality, that is, equality of results. They represent a change in public equality policy.
- Quotas compensate for structural barriers that prevent fair competition; a legitimate action for justice, democracy and
- equality
- Stronger debate on the introduction of quota systems in Malta should be a priority for all stakeholders



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3. Addressing abuse on the Elderly for a Better Quality of life

Name of Organisation submitting the resolution – National Council of Women

Justification

As follow-up of the NCW Conference on Abuse of the Elderly entitled ‘**I am ME not my age**’ as part of the 16 days of activism campaign against Domestic Violence, NCW is submitting the following proposed Resolution

Definition of Abuse

Abuse of the older person could occur in either institutional or domestic settings

Abuse may consist of a single act or repeated actions.

It may be

- physical,
- psychological/emotional/ verbal abuse
- financial /material abuse
- sexual abuse
- rights abuse
- Intentional/unintentional neglect –including ignoring medical or physical care needs, failure to provide access to appropriate health, social care , adequate nutrition and heating
- Discrimination & ageism
- Stranger abuse
- Cyber abuse
- Significant harm: the impairment of *an avoidable deterioration* in physical, mental health

Victims most likely to be abused:

- Aged 60 and over
- Vulnerable
- Illiterate/semi/illiterate
- Dependent on others for basic needs
- Unable to communicate effectively
- Persons with dementia and/or mental impairments
- Visual/hearing impairments
- Physical disabilities
- The abuser could be a family member or a care-giver, an acquaintance or even a stranger

Recommendations

Abuse of the older person can be stopped. Abuse on an older person is not excusable

- Society in general has an obligation to report suspicion of abuse to the Police Force or Social Service Agencies
- A team of different professionals (Police, Social Worker, geriatrician, psychiatrist and psychologist) should be appointed to serve as a point of referral and deal with all elder abuse cases
- Lack of involvement: Greater public awareness and involvement are required for the success of an Abuse Prevention Program . Changing attitudes and mentality: Outsiders prefer not to interfere because they believe that family problems should remain in the family
- Training for the Police Force and Social Workers to deal professionally and effectively with cases of abuse of the elderly
- Reviewing current legislation and its implementation to ensure that effective penalties are implemented and enforced to act as a deterrent to reduce abuse
- Statistics re elder abuse from all the Social Services agencies and the Police should be used for education and awareness raising as well as for future policies purposes.
- Creating more public awareness through media about the subject and how one can get professional help/services to deal with abuse

Proposals for a family member, caregiver and acquaintance to cope with stress and avoid burnout

- Seek help/support from others
- Vent out problems by talking with friends etc you can rely on
- Join a support group for carers, i.e. sharing experiences with others
- Take time off to dedicate to oneself; doing something you enjoy
- Consider government or private services including private carers, nurses, respite care and residential homes
- Attend care giving training

Proposed Positive action

- Education in order to fight negative behaviour/attitudes towards older/vulnerable persons whilst promoting the right and dignity of the older person
- Prevention programs to create more awareness and more efficient measures for society with which to identify and assist victims through media, school education programs, seminars/conferences, providing financial resources to NGOs working in this field
- Research is an important means of better identification of the true extent of the problem. Over the years, social workers have collected extensive information regarding cases of abuse. This information should be used to create and update services through legal assistance and community work to make them more relevant to today's needs
- Factual and practical active ageing for the elderly
- Inclusion in the Community – Day care and night shelter services should be able to provide accessible transport for those who have some kind of mobility problems including wheelchair users
- Non-discrimination in job opportunities and at the workplace

- Retirement from the work place should be optional as long as the pensioner is in good physical and mental health. Older persons should decide for themselves whether they should retire or not when reaching retirement age
- Research studies on new forms of positive action

Sources –

Papers presented during the NCW Conference -27 November 2017- I am ME not My Age

Reference to the following legislative provisions:

Abuse on Elderly or Dependent Persons

Sub-Title XI of Title VIII (Of Crimes against the Person) of Part II (Of Crimes and Punishments) of Book First (Penal Laws) of the Criminal Code (introduced by Act XXXI of 2014) – Artt. 257A-257F and

The criminal law provisions against the abuse of elderly or dependent persons that have been introduced by Act 31 of 2014, by means of which artt. 257A to 257F were added to the Criminal Code and

AN ACT to amend the Civil Code, Cap. 16, and to provide for matters ancillary or consequential thereto, 26th February, 2016



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4. The role of teachers, trainers and school leaders in improving the status of Vocational, Education and Training (VET)

Name of Organisation submitting the resolution – National Council of Women

Justification

VET in Europe: one term, many interpretations

National VET systems vary considerably across Europe. Although each country has its own approach to VET provision, content and governance, there is common ground among them.

VET is perceived as occupation -specific education and training.

It is geared towards securing supply of skilled labour, and is usually considered inferior to general or academic education.

In most countries, it predominantly addresses young people, providing them with qualifications at the middle level (EQF levels 3 and 4).

Reflecting this combination of diversity and convergence, four main patterns can be distinguished in European VET systems today.

1. VET as work-based/dual initial training
2. VET as initial vocational training
3. VET as (part of) lifelong learning
4. VET as further training
 - VET is a vital part of the education sector and therefore further measures are necessary make VET more attractive to students and adults, to demonstrate to them that there are job opportunities in the market for them and also to ensure quality learning outcomes
 - VET and apprenticeships and work-based learning systems need to reflect the needs of Industry. There is a vital need for high quality VET and apprenticeship to meet the fast changing needs of industry
 - The above NCW proposal gives added value and calls for a new action plan in the field of education and industry relations in line with the Commission Communication *‘Investing in a smart, innovative and sustainable industry : A renewed Industrial Policy Strategy’*.
 - This will profit all stakeholders, economically and socially, raising the status of VET Institutions, VET teachers, trainers and VET School leaders for better cooperation for a thriving industry in a fast-changing industrial environment .

Recommendations

- Create more awareness of the fact that work is also changing in traditional and non-traditional companies, requires knowledge-intensive work, and which therefore call for new competences as an important target

- Improving the role and status of VET Teachers, trainers school leaders and other education personnel
- Contributing to high quality learning outcomes for VET and apprenticeships to better prepare students for life, further education and quality jobs
- Promote further investment in the VET systems in particular to teaching, workshops and equipment of VET Institutes to keep up technical developments and provide quality education and training to students and education personnel
- Promote the involvement of social partners in the development of high quality apprenticeships and work-based learning schemes
- Different sectors of Industry, education systems at national level, researchers, VET Institutions and students and adults need to work together and be proactive in developing the necessary vocational education and training, as a result of which, a range of stakeholders and Industry stand to gain at national and EU level
- Improving **the quality** of VET Institutions and equipping them to keep abreast with technical and technological developments, innovative key competences and new skills in the fields of energy and low carbon economy, entrepreneurship skills, team-based skills, new forms of work and relationships within a company, mobility and transnational apprenticeships and sharing of best practice are necessary for the European Industry to thrive in a highly competitive global environment

(source: Joint ETUCE and EFEE Statement on improving Vocational Education and Training in Europe – Plenary 23 November 2017)



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5. Health Literacy: To Enhance Communication between Health Carer and Users

Name of Organisation submitting the resolution - Malta Union of Midwives and Nurses (MUMN)

Justification

- a. The right for informed consent is a well accepted fundamental principle for health care users. It is also the practice that an explanation of benefits and possible risks is explained prior to any procedure, of surgical or medical intervention
- b. However the language and the medium used are not always getting across the information given in such a manner that it is fully understood.
- c. Many patients experience the fact that although an explanation was given and consent is signed, they do not understand the full implications of the intervention and what impact could result afterwards.
- d. A person who is going through such situation could find oneself in a vacuum and not always in a position to find help or ask for further clarifications.
- e. It is also possible that one can decide to give consent because of fear of the unknown without being able to fully realise the psychological and social implications.
- f. Furthermore, one has to understand that not everyone is able or is in position to afford to seek private consultation.
- g. Although a lot of information is available on the social media one does not always understand the medical jargon and even if an explanation is given directly to the person concerned, the information is not always understood for various reasons:
 - o poor communication with the doctor,
 - o the quality of the person understanding and
 - o the physical and psychological state at that particular moment.
- h. We also have to consider the various cultural differences we come across in our society that could present
 - o misunderstandings and
 - o lack of cultural competences ,
 - o language barriers from both the health professionals and the clients/patients background

Recommendations

- a. The patient should be considered intelligent enough to be given full explanation of How and Why the Surgeon is giving a particular advice.
- b. The decision of the patient to refuse detailed information about the intervention should be respected, as some individuals cannot emotionally cope with such information
- c. A copy of the consent form should be given and explained to the patient during the consultation process so that if there are any medical jargon or abbreviations like TAH

or BSO, the patient will have ample time for clarifications and explanations before the intervention.

Further Recommendations

- a. Raise awareness about Health Literacy, so that patients could have the information needed to decide about their health and can discuss and clarify any misconceptions and risks with their health professionals
- b. Set up a helpline so that clients/patients can clarify such misconceptions and make it possible for them to understand the information so that they are in a position to participate in the decision (informed decision) that they need to take regards their health
- c. Promote cultural competences among health professionals and ensure that appropriate information is available in various languages so that the rights of patients are also respected.
- d. Ensure that there is more widespread information on Patients' Rights
- e. Implement a system where patients can provide feedback about their particular experience.



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6. Ensuring Informed Consent to meet the Holistic Needs of Women undergoing Gynaecological Surgery

Name of Organisation submitting the resolution – National Council of Women

Justification

- The National Council of Women has been asked to propose recommendations for a more holistic approach to improve the methods of information given to women who are going to undergo Gynaecological Surgery
- Recent research studies reveal that in the UK hysterectomy and similar interventions have been reduced by 50% that is about 25,000 interventions annually. Scientific Evidence is revealing the devastating side effects that such interventions are causing on the overall health of women. Women who undergo such intervention suffered from depression and anxiety, studies also reported negative effects on the brain, bones, skin and hair
- There is the need to address the misleading mentality that pregnancy is an illness
- The emphasis on fear of diseases and cancers is encouraging vulnerable people to remove their healthy breast and to remove healthy organs under the misleading pretension of prevention, with the devastating effects that this brings on human beings and society as a whole. On the contrary the emphasis should be on HEALTH and on ways and means to IMPROVE our health and to preserve our body with all its organs

Recommendations

- No Gynaecological Surgery should be carried out unless medically indicated. According to medical professional ethics, no surgical intervention that is T.A.H. and B.SO should be carried out for preventive reasons, unless medically indicated, including clear evidence (T.A.H (Total Abdominal Hysterectomy) u B.SO (Bilateral Salping Oophorectomy)
- Less invasive surgery (Laparoscopic surgery) should be an alternative for major surgery with same outcome.
- No pressure should be exercised on the patient to accept surgical intervention for preventive measures, that have not been medically identified.
- According to medical professional ethics, the removal of healthy organs for merely preventive measures should not be carried out and should not be encouraged by surgeons.
- The patient's informed consent should be required and her decision should be respected.
- The patient should be considered intelligent enough to be given full explanation of How and Why the Surgeon is giving a particular advice.

- The decision of the patient to refuse detailed information about the intervention should be respected, as some individuals cannot emotionally cope with such information
- A copy of the consent form should be given to the patient immediately after the patient signs it so that if there are any medical jargon or abbreviations like TAH or BSO, the patient will have ample time for clarifications and explanations before the intervention.
- Prior to the intervention, information that influence the identity of the person, such as mastectomy, hysterectomy should be appropriately provided, in line with the sensitivity of the situation and possibility of negative effects of such interventions
- Patient should not be terrified about possibility of cancer unless diagnosis is made.
- *Booking*History (the first visit) and Gynae Review (GOP) should be held in an environment where the patient can clarify queries and discuss with her gynaecologist and be able to do so in subsequent appointments prior to the interventions
- No discussions should be carried out in the immediate period prior to the surgical intervention as it is of utmost importance that the patient is calm and does not undergo undue psychological stress or fear
- Surgical interventions cause physical and psychological pain and leave a strong impact on every woman and therefore there is the need to treat such cases of intervention with more sensitivity
- It is essential that the language used is understood by the patient when discussing the details of the consent form to be signed by the patient
- Quality of care should be given great importance, it is essential that the holistic needs of the patient are taken into account, rather than focus only on the physical wellbeing.
- It is fundamental that full explanation is given to the patient during the post op Gynaecout Patient Review and be given the necessary advice about her life-style, when necessary:
 - During the follow up meeting with the Surgeon after 6 weeks from the operation, the Surgeon should discuss the results of the histology with the patient and the patient should be given a copy of the result of the histology.
 - Since these interventions affect not only the physical but also the psychological and the holistic health of the patient, it is important that surgeons give the necessary time to their patients Before and After the interventions: explaining the reasons for medical advice given and showing the patient why the surgeon arrived at these conclusions and then discussing the outcome of the intervention with the patient
- With regards to student trainees, there should not be more than one student with every doctor or consultant, when the patient agrees to surgical intervention, thus respecting the privacy of the patient

Other recommendations

- Although training of medical students should focus on the importance of the physical wellbeing, there is a lack of the psychological/social/spiritual aspects of core holistic needs of the patient that should be part of the training
- Ongoing education to Midwives/ Nurses/ Doctors is highly important
- Using the expertise of knowledge doctors to provide training for doctors in Advance and Update is fundamental



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7. Personal and Social Development beyond Secondary Schooling

Name of Organisation submitting the resolution – Malta Personal and Social Development Association (MPSDA)

Justification

From local research, it is evident that PSD in the primary and the secondary educational level, has effective results in terms of well-being, quality of life and employability. As a result, the Malta PSD Association is proposing that effective. Professional programs and practice on personal and social competences continues to be offered to all students at a further and higher educational level to meet the needs of young people of different ages in today's changing society

Recommendations

MPSDA recommends that

PSD is offered as a compulsory school subject and as a cross-curricular theme at post-secondary and tertiary level institutions in State, Church and Private Education Institutions .

Proposed subjects to be tackled are:

- Self-esteem
- Exploration of their personal and social identity
- Career exploration
- Relationships
- Emotional literacy
- Decision-making
- Assertiveness
- Public speaking
- Conflict management
- Safe places and alternatives for leisure safety
- Personal safety
- Substance Abuse
- Internet safety
- Sexuality
- Sexually Transmitted Infection and Protection
- Understanding the role and responsibilities of individuals at the workplace at different levels



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8. L-Ewtanasja.

Name of Organisation submitting the resolution – Azzjoni Kattolika Fergħa Nisa

Justification

Billi qed naraw li qed issir diskussjoni f'Malta dwar l-Ewtanasja partikolarment minhabba l-fatt li diga tezisti xi forma legali dwar l-Ewtansja f' diversi pajjizi u il-fatt li qed ikun hemm pressjoni biex jidhlu f'pajjiżna ukoll, nixtiequ nagħtu il-veduti tagħna

Nemmnu li l-hajja tibda mill-konċepiment u tispicċa mal-mewt naturali.

Nemmnu li hadd m'ghandu d-dritt li jtemm il-hajja ta' persuna. Id-dritt għall-hajja huwa fundamentali u wiehed mid-drittijiet principali tal-bniedem.

Għalhekk kull intervent li jfixxkel dan il-proċess huwa qtil, għaliex imur kontra l-liġi naturali.

Recommendations

- Naħdmu iżjed biex kemm bil-medicina kif ukoll bis-sappport professjonali u ta' xulxin inkunu nistgħu ntejbju il-hajja sakemm tintemm b'mod naturali u
- Biex kull persuna tifhem u tghix b'mod iżjed pozittiv it-tbatija, sew dik li tghaddi minnha hi, kif ukoll it-tbatija ta' dawk ta' madwarha, speċjalment f'dawn ic-cirkostanti imsemmija hawn taht fost ohrajn:
- F'sitwazzjonijiet diffiċli tal-hajja, jigifieri ta' mard terminali, ta' tbatija kbira u ta' trauma psikologika li jkun għaddej minnha il-pazjent, fejn allura ma jkunx f'pozizzjoni li jiddeciedi dwar is-sahha tiegħu u ta' hajtu
- F'sitwazzjonijiet fejn jista' jkun hemm lok ta' abbuz minn xi familjari jew nies ohra biex jagħmlu pressjoni fuq il-pazjent biex itemm hajtu
- Ir-rispett u d-dinjita' ta' persuna f'dawn ic-cirkostanzi għandu jiehu priorita billi isir kull sforz mediku, psikologiku u spiritwali' mhux biss mill-professjonisti medici imma wkoll mill-familjari li jassistu l-pazjent f'dawn ic-cirkostanzi diffiċili



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9. L-Abort

Name of Organisation submitting the resolution – Azzjoni Kattolika Fergħa Nisa

Justification

- a. .Billi qed naraw li l-abort li diġa jeżisti f'diversi pajjiżi qed ikun hemm pressjoni biex jidhol f'pajjiżna ukoll, nixtiequ nagħtu il-veduti tagħna.
- b. L-abort hu att kriminali li jmur kontra d-dritt għall-hajja, wiehed mid-drittijiet fundamentali tal-bniedem
- c. Nemmnju li l-hajja tibda mill-konċepiment u tispicċa mal-mewt naturali. Għalhekk kull intervent li jfixkel dan il-proċess huwa qtil għaliex imur kontra l-liġi naturali.
- d. Ahna konxji li xi drabi t-tqala tista' tohloq diffikultajiet u problemi partikolarment għall-omm, izda qatt m'għandu jkun li t-tarbija fil-guf tbat konsegwenzi meta m'għandha l-ebda htija

Recommendations

- a. Nirrikmandaw li jingħataw servizzi professjonali ta' edukazzjoni u direzzjoni li jinkludu għajnuniet materjali, spiritwali u psikoloġiċi għal tfajliet u nisa li jkunu ħarġu tqal kontra ix-xewqa tagħhom, biex ikunu f'pozizzjoni li jsalvaw it-tarbija li se titwieled, minflok jirrikorru għall-abort
- b. Huwa important li l-Istat joffri servizzi ta' għal dawn l-ommijiet biex ikunu jistgħu jaslu għal tqala b'saħħitha u b'hekk il-hajja tat-tarbija tigi salvagwardjata sa mill-konċepiment. Dan bhalissa qed isir minn għaqdiet volontari
- c. Huwa importanti wkoll ir-rwol tal-missier tat-tarbija, f'kull tip ta' relazzjoni, anki barra miz-zwieġ. Il-tarbija għandha d-dritt li jkollha missier u li jipprotegiha. Bħala missier għandu d-dover li jipptoteġiha mill-abort
- d. F'kull sitwazzjoni fejn jidhol l-abort il-vuci tat-tarbija għandha tingħata l-istess smigh u valur daqs ta' l-omm jew/u tal-missier



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10. Legislazzjoni biex tiprotegi lill-vittmi tal-Prostituzzjoni

Name of Organisation submitting the resolution – Azzjoni Kattolika Fergħa Nisa

Justification

- Billi qed naraw li l-istat qed jikkontempla li jillegalizza l-prostituzzjoni, nixtiequ nagħtu il-veduti tagħna dwar din il-kwistjoni.
- Ahna tal-fehma li l-prostituzzjoni jisraq mid-dritt fundamentali tad-dinjita' tiegħu/tagħha meta dan ikun qed jigi manipulat biex ibiġh l-izjed haġa prezzjuża u intima li għandu: ġismu.
- Il-maġġoranza l-kbira tal-individwi li jidhlu għal dan it-tip ta' xogħol ikunu għamlu hekk għaliex ma jkunux jistgħu jagħmlu mod iehor minnhabba l-ambjent li kienu għexu fih fit-trobbija u ma sabux mezz ta' ghajnuna biex joħorġu minnu.
- Barra minn hekk, hemm ukoll tfajliet u nisa li jigu minn pajjizi ta' l-Ewropa tal-Lvant, fost ohrajn, bil-wegħda ta' xogħol dicenti u meta jaslu Malta jsibu ruhhom ingannati, jittehdilhom il-passaport u jsiru skajvi ta' min ihaddimhom, tant li ma jkunux jistgħu johorġu minn din ix-xibka
- Illum qed insibu li l-prostituzzjoni qegħda tinheba wara kliem sabih. Il-prostituzzjoni hi fil-fatt vjolenza fuq in-nisa
- Illum qed insibu li l-prostituzzjoni qed tinfirex f'hafna *Massage Parlours* u *Gentlemen's Clubs*
- Qed jintuza lingwagg gdid biex il-prostituzzjoni tinghata x-xejra attrajenti

Recommendations

- Għalhekk iżjed milli nillegalizzaw dan it-tip ta' xogħol, l-Istat għandu jgħin lill dawn l-individwi biex joħorġu minnu
- Isaħħaħ l-organizzazzjonijiet li diġa jeżistu għal dan il-għan
- Jgħin lill dawn l-individwi bil-ghajnuna ta' diversi professjonisti, għaqdiet ta' min ihaddem(MEA) u għaqdiet li jirraprezentaw il-haddiema (GWU u UHM) fost ohrajn, billi iharrighom f'tip ta' xogħol iehor biex ikunu jistgħu jaqilgħu l-ghixien tagħhom b'mod dicenti
- Fejn jidhol traffikar ta' tfajliet u nisa, għal skopijiet ta' prostituzzjoni, in-Nazzjonijiet Magħquda jezigu fil-*Palermo Protocol* li dan huwa Att Kriminali.

Definition: UN Palermo Protocol: 'The Protocol to prevent, suppress and punish trafficking in persons defines trafficking in Persons as the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons, by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation. Exploitation shall include, at a minimum, the exploitation of the prostitution of others or other forms of sexual exploitation, forced labour or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude or the removal of organs.' It goes on to say that 'the consent of a victim of trafficking in persons to the intended exploitation set forth in the above shall be irrelevant where any of the means set forth in the aforementioned have been used.'"

- Hemm bzonn ta' aktar tahrig għall-membri tal-korp tal-pulizija, f' dan il-qasam, kif ukoll tagħrif dwar id-drittijiet tan-nisa, biex il-pulizija jwettqu xogħolhom b'aktar riġett u skont il-lgi
- Għalhekk il-Gvern, bil-ghajnuna tal-Korp ta-Pulizija, għandu jeżigi ank bl-infurzar tal-ligi li x-xiri ta' servizzi sesswali għall-prostituzzjoni, għandu jkun att kriminali. Din il-ligi għandha tidhol fis-sehh mill-aktar fis possibbli



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11. Ensuring a Safer Workplace

Name of Organisation submitting the resolution – GWU Equal Opportunities Committee

Justification

- a. Harassment levels at the work place in Malta are very high , often quoted as the highest in Europe. According to the Times of Malta (10 August 2017) 80% have experienced or witnessed forms of sexual harassment at work. The absolute majority are women or LGBTIQ
- b. Currently statistics on diseases at the workplace are missing. In most countries in Europe data and statistics on diseases are provided according to different industrial sectors

Recommendations

- a. Training sessions for active volunteer members and Union Shop Stewards on how to identify and address issues of harassment at the workplace according to the provisions of Maltese legislation on ‘Harassment at the Workplace’ in line with EU Legislation
- b. Research regarding sick leave to be conducted by the Social Services Department. The data gathered should provide information on reasons for sick leave take-up and other reasons resulting from working conditions, long hours of work and stress among others



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Exploratory Paper on The Future of Occupational Safety and Health in Europe: *Strengthening Social Europe through Healthier Workplaces for Safer Workers*

Justification and risks to be addressed

According to recent data from Eurostat (2016) every year more than 3 million EU-28 workers are involved in serious accidents at work, which force them to take at least four days of workplace absence. The European Agency for Safety and Health at work (EU-OSHA) reports that 15% of EU workers have to handle dangerous substances as part of their job, and another 15% report breathing in smoke, fumes, powder or dust at work. Occupational cancer is the biggest killer at work in Europe and other high-income economies (WHO Classification). In addition to the immensurable human costs, these occurrences cause significant loss for the European economy as a whole. The EU-OSHA recently estimated the cost of work-related accidents as EUR 476 billion per year, 3.3% of the EU GDP.

Studies carried out

In early October 2017, Marian Schaapmann was appointed head of unit dealing with working conditions and health and safety issues within the European Trade Union Institute, (ETUI) an independent research and training centre of the European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC).

She conducted research in a wide range of occupational diseases and working conditions

New data review highlights the major role of working conditions in breast cancers

Results

Over the past eight years a large amount of data has been collected on the role of environment exposures in the occurrence of breast cancers in two different ways:

- **Working environments as occupational exposures**
- **In the course of ordinary life as a consequence of industrial and commercial choices**

Policies focusing on eliminating these risks factors would considerably reduce the incidence of cancers of the breast which is the main site affected by cancer in women's bodies

Among the most frequent of occupational exposure, the following were cited: endocrine-disrupting chemicals, night shift work, ionising radiation, passive smoking, compounds used i pesticides, aromatic amines (found in cosmetics) benzene, and various metals.

Also identified were increased concentration of iron, nickel, chromium, zinc, mercury and lead in tissue biopsies from women with breast cancer.

European Parliament rejects Commission proposals on endocrine disruptors

On 4 October 2017, the European Parliament rejected the Commission's proposal and was asked to redraft a replacement proposal . The debate is still ongoing

Studies in Switzerland

**An overall increase in most sources of physical stress at work, such as loud noise, vibrations, painful positions and repetitive movements was observed in Switzerland
The health problems most frequently experienced by workers include backache, headaches, and eye strain and muscular pains in the shoulders, neck and upper limbs**

Study in Sweden confirms diesel engine exhaust emissions as a major cause of lung cancers.

A Swedish study published in June 2017, compared the occurrence of lung cancer among workers who had been exposed to carcinogenic diesel engine exhaust emissions (DEEEs) in the course of their work and those who had not.

The findings of the study confirm that occupational exposure to DEEEs is a major cause of lung cancer. DEEEs are currently the focal point of debate on the proposed revision of the EU Directive on the protection of workers from the risk of carcinogens or mutagens at work. The research found a correlation between levels of risk and exposure with a particularly high increase in lung cancer occurrence compared to non-exposed workers – approximately 65% for workers exposed to elemental carbon (one of the components of diesel engine emissions)

Belgium steps up efforts to prevent risks to reproductive health in the workplace

Lack of progress at EU level forced Belgium to take unilateral action, following the example of EU Member States such as France, Germany, Austria, Finland and the Czech Republic. As a result an amendment was adopted by the European Parliament and the Council of Ministers in July 2017 so that Europe will be obliged to take action by the first quarter of 2019 at the latest

Other areas

More than half of women say *that personal protective equipment (PPE)* prevents them from doing their job

The unisex approach

The need to provide a range of sizes for both sexes

Male Respiratory protective equipment – does not fit women

The wrong shoes or overall (can cause tripping

Unsuitable gloves which can lead to problems gripping

Belts and body armour that can rub against the skin if they do not accommodate breasts and hip

Cleaning workforce at particular risk of pulmonary disease – workers' exposure to chemicals in cleaning products and the biological risks associated with mould and dust

Finally, There is a need for clarification of the applicability of existing EU regulations on safety and health at work for new forms of employment, procedures for dealing with breaches of these regulations, responsibilities for inspection and for workers', consumers' and public liability insurance.

Other sources: Public Policy Exchange



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What is the gender pay gap?

European Commission

EQUAL PAY?

It's time to close the gap

What is the gender pay gap?

- It is the difference between the gross hourly earnings of all working men and those of all working women.
- Women earn over **16%** less than men per hour in the EU.
- **84** cents for every €1 a man earns
- Around 2 months worked for FREE each year
- The older you are, the bigger the gap

For example, in Finland

Under 25 - 6.3%

25-34 12 - 7%

35-44 20 - 2%

45-54 - 21%

55-64 - 23.6%

Over 64 - 25.8%

SO, MEN EARN MORE THAN WOMEN, THAT'S INEVITABLE ISN'T IT?

- More women work part-time, so they should earn less

WRONG - Working fewer hours a week means you should take home less pay per month, NOT less pay per hour.

- Women earn less because they choose lower earning jobs

WRONG - Women tend to earn less per hour than men for the same job whether it is a highly-skilled profession, such as a doctor or nurse or a lower-skilled job such as a salesperson. The gender pay gap exists across our economy, and in all sectors and occupations.

- Men are better educated, so should earn more

WRONG - Today, 60% of university graduates in the EU are women.

SO, WHAT IS REALLY BEHIND THE GENDER PAY GAP?

- **Fewer promotions**
Fewer opportunities
- **Extra unpaid work**
- **Taking career breaks to care for others**
- **The glass ceiling**
- **Discrimination**

What does it really mean for women?

- **Less money now**
- **Less money later**
- **Fewer paid hours worked**
- **More career breaks**
- **Gender pay gap**

-41% annual earnings

- Less money to save and invest **39%**
- EU average pension gap between men and women.

FIND OUT MORE

See what the European Commission is doing to close the [gender pay gap](#) and [fight gender inequality](#)

Sources: Eurostat, Eurofound

Special thanks to Marie Jacobi, Gabrielle Heinzl and Gabrielle Schlipf

(<http://www.visualrecording.de>) for their illustrations

[Twitter](#)

Věra Jourová

Commissioner for Justice,

Consumers and Gender Equality



Reaffirmation of Policy

NCW Annual General Meeting

January 2018



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Reaffirmation of Policy

1. Promoting Women's participation in the digital society - making women more visible in the Digital Society –NCW
2. The long-term care for ageing societies – NCW
3. The challenges of changing employment relations -NCW
4. Addressing precarious work – GWU



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1. Promoting Women's participation in the digital society *Making women more visible in the digital society*

Name of Organisation submitting the resolution - National Council of Women

Justification

The Single Market and the development of the Digital Single Market is a key priority of the 2017 Maltese Presidency of the Council of the European Union. Access to the digital society in a comprehensive manner is one of the objectives for the whole of European Society.

The future of the European Union depends on research and innovation. Europe needs 1 million more researchers by 2020 to stay competitive in the world. Research could also create 3.7 million jobs and increase annual EU GDP by EUR 795 billion by 2025 if the target of investing 3% of EU GDP in R&D by 2020 is achieved.

Research and Innovation

- Women's academic careers remain marked by strong vertical segregation: women constitute a higher proportion of university students (55%) and graduates (59%) than men, but men overtake women at the higher levels. Women hold only 44% of junior academic posts, 36% of tenured posts and 18% of professorships
- Promoting gender equality and equal opportunities for women and men is a commitment of the EU in all its policy areas, including research and innovation (R&I). Data available at European level show a striking imbalance between women and men in the European research sector.
- Gender balance is crucial for a well-functioning research system. To achieve their policy objectives for research, the Member States and the EU as a whole must use all the human capital at their disposal. Currently only 30% of the 7 million people working in ICT sector are women. Women are under-represented at all levels and above all at decision-making positions.
- Although a higher proportion of women than men complete higher education, they are still at a disadvantage compared to men when it comes to jobs, pay, working conditions and access to positions with more responsibility

Recommendations

- The Horizon 2020 initiative must help to strengthen Europe's position in the technology field where business post a lower level of investment than their competitors in Asia and the uSA
- Government should aim to improve the legal and policy frameworks for gender equality in research, based on the recommendations set out in the ERA communication and the Horizon 2020 programme with particular focus on recruitment, retention and career progression of female researchers; address gender

imbalances in decision-making processes and strengthen the gender dimension in research programs

- There is a need of change in policy as a result of the drop in the number of women ICT graduates: currently only 29 in every 1000 women holds a postgraduate degree in an ICT subject and only four in every 1000 will be employed directly in the sector

Women's participation in the digital society

Women are still under-represented in SET including, science, engineering, technology and architecture and skilled roles to construction

Few women are working in SET and fewer still are in leadership positions The Equality Act 2010 makes requirements of employers and service providers to demonstrate their commitment to equality and comply with legislation regarding a range of inequalities Malta Council for Science and Technology (MCST) is currently looking into the Gender Equality/Mainstreaming Priority (ERA Priority 4) under the ERA Roadmap. Malta is required to devise a national roadmap similar to the EU-wide roadmap

Recommendations

- Public/national research institutions and the social partners, should explore ways of ensuring a work-life balance by developing and implementing family-friendly policies for both female and male researchers.
- Members States should support and strengthen the dialogue between research institutions, businesses and related social partners.
- European Structural Funds and other funding schemes should be available for institutional change initiatives, in accordance with the ERA communication.
- The evaluation, accreditation and funding of research institutions and organisations should be linked to their performance on gender equality
- Research increasingly shows that that diversity is essential to building talented workforces it improves problem-solving and innovation and boosts business performance
- Expanding research to determine which factors are resulting in low participation of women in ICT in general and why few women choose studies in the fields of science, mathematics, and technology
- Adopting plans and strong measures with adequate funding that address the issue of gender inequality in these sectors
- Consider the situation of women and girls with disabilities when it comes to access to SET
- Identify career paths and models that can provide inspiration for women and girls
- Revising the status of the European Code of Best Practices for Women in ICT

Online representation

Women in SET are often invisible or marginalized in the media, which consequently does not inspire young people looking for interesting careers or to strengthen the position of women who are already active in SET

Recommendations

- There is the need for more dialogue with publishers and editors of scientific publications in order to remove gender bias from and increase female scientists' contributions to scientific publications, editorials, reviews and survey articles.
- Analyzing successful campaigns in social media education and employment

- Editorial decisions about website content are often the result of individual decisions and therefore diversity is often not addressed at all
- On sites where there is the opportunity to post comments, the content often reflects the gender bias of contributors, with women often being criticized for their appearance and lifestyle rather than for their successful managerial roles.
- Representing women across websites calls for examples of women actively engaged in SET work that might equally be performed by a man
- Using Facebook, Twitter and other new media to encourage women to actively communicate online and through blogs to raise the profile of women working in these fields

Courtesy of UKrc

Advancing gender equality in science, engineering and technology

EESC SOC 502 Women in Science



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2. Long-term care in ageing societies

Name of organization submitting the resolution – National Council of Women

Justification

Labour market shortages in the healthcare sector are not being adequately addressed. There is an ongoing crisis¹, and labour shortages will increase unless appropriate policy responses are pursued. In 2010, the European Commission warned that a supply shortage of two million healthcare workers would emerge by 2020 if urgent action was not taken to redress supply shortfalls of up to one million workers in Long-term care (LTC²)

Live-in care workers represent a numerically significant yet marginalised section of the LTC workforce. The exact number of live-in care workers is uncertain due to a lack of data; they are often overlooked in data collection systems. In the context of a poorly recognised and remunerated care workforce, live-in care workers have for too long remained invisible to policymakers.

Live-in care workers are present across all Member States. Many are migrants from third countries while others are European citizens working in their home countries or abroad. Some work irregularly as undocumented migrants and some are engaged in circular or temporary migration. Many work in precarious labour conditions including bogus self-employment.

As there is currently no occupational definition of ‘live-in’ care workers, their situation is equated to that of domestic workers³. According to the ILO, domestic work, including care work, accounts for between 5% and 9% of all employment in industrialised countries⁴.

Some Member States have moved forward with formalisation and inclusion of undocumented migrant care workers by signing ILO Convention No 189.

Labour shortages, austerity, migration and live-in care workers

Homecare is rapidly expanding, influenced by a growing preference for care in the home, the prohibitive costs of residential care for many people and the lack of adequate investment in care sector infrastructure.

¹ [UNI Europa UNICARE](#) (2016).

² [European Commission](#) (2013).

³ Domestic work as defined by [Eurostat](#) includes the activities of households as employers of domestic staff, such as maids, cooks, waiters, valets, laundresses, gardeners, caretakers, governesses, babysitters, tutors, secretaries, etc.

⁴ [International Labour Organisation](#) (2012).

Despite growing awareness of the importance of the care sector for economic prosperity, the contribution of live-in care work to the European economy is unmeasured and should be addressed by Europe-wide research.

Many European women are trapped in the so-called "sandwich" position, expected to look after their parents as well as their children. They increasingly rely on paid care to do this work.

Working conditions of live-in care workers

The low status of live-in care workers is a product of gender assumptions that care work is low-skilled "women's work". It is also sustained by the structural marginalisation of migrant women. In various labour surveys, domestic workers are classed as low-skilled or unqualified. However, significant numbers of live-in care workers possess skills and qualifications resulting from years of experience or from unrecognised formal training and certification programmes. Live-in care workers are often required to demonstrate care experience and to have qualifications before they are hired, and yet their working conditions do not reflect these.

Some live-in care workers experience unregulated working arrangements and many work irregularly. They are often excluded from exercising their labour rights and face exploitation. Others work as bogus self-employed people. In many cases, labour and other state inspectorates, as well as trade unions, have no access to care-givers in their workplaces (i.e. private homes).

Recommendations

- Measures for the regularisation and legalisation of live-in care workers must be supported to ensure legal pathways into the care sector. Such an approach is not without precedent: in Spain and Italy, some 500 000 undocumented domestic workers have been regularised since 2002⁵.
- Labour migration policies that enable third-country nationals to work regularly in the care sector, with equal treatment and the right to change employer, must be developed.
- There is a need for the introduction of a common occupational definition of "live-in" care work in Europe, recognised as a form of homecare provision aimed at recognising the existence of live-in carers in the European labour market and improving the quality of the LTC services they deliver
- The definition of live-in care work should cover working arrangements for workers (employed or self-employed) living in private residences where their work primarily involves provision of care services to older and disabled people.
- Live-in care workers, regardless of their employment or self-employment status, should be treated as part of the system of long-term care (LTC) provision.
- For the purpose of informing policymaking, Eurostat should gather adequate data on live-in care workers.
- live-in care workers should be treated in a similar way to other care workers. This means that they should enjoy similar protection, such as limits on working time (including stand-by) and protection against bogus self-employment.

Further recommendations

That the European Union to work closely with Member States to coordinate supply and mobility of live-in care workers as part of an approach to improve the overall capacity of the sector to deliver quality care. Specific measures should include:

- improving safeguards in the Employers' Sanctions Directive (2009/52/EC) to protect labour rights of undocumented workers in order to tackle irregular employment.
- The Victims' Rights Directive (2012/29/EU) must be rigorously applied to provide effective support for live-in care workers who are victims of exploitation, regardless of their migration status;
- bringing all relevant EU directives into line with International Labour Organisation (ILO) Convention No 189 providing rights for domestic workers;
- including the rights of live-in carers and their care recipients in future revisions or proposals of European and Member States' legislation;
- prioritising the reform of live-in care arrangements in the European Platform Against Undeclared Work, an initiative welcomed by the EESC;
- bringing care workers' rights into the European Semester and including them in "New start for work-life balance" consultations;
- initiating a Europe-wide information campaign on the rights of live-in care workers addressed to care users and providers;
- promoting and supporting the establishment of organisations and cooperatives of live-in care workers;
- implementing processes for recognition, harmonisation and transferability of qualifications and experience acquired by live-in care workers, using instruments for the recognition of qualifications, including those newly introduced by the Agenda for new skills and jobs⁶;
- redirecting European funds to finance training courses for current and potential live-in care workers in order to improve the quality of care;
- monitoring and improving posting of live-in carers by implementing the principle of equal pay for equal work.

Source: EESC Opinion SOC 508 Developing services to the family



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3. The challenges of changing employment relations

Name of organisation submitting the resolution – National Council of Women

Justification and state of play

- Rapid development of technologies, combined with other economic and societal developments have seen an increase in new forms of work and employment relationships that are transforming and creating an ever more complex labour market landscape.
- Innovation and creativity are important in driving a sustainable and competitive social market economy. It is vital to achieve a balance between promoting the economic and social benefits of these new developments ensuring necessary safeguards for workers, consumers and businesses, whilst avoiding their abuse as a means of circumventing fair labour practices.
- New forms of employment have the potential to create job opportunities, enable labour markets to function more smoothly, offering increased flexibility for both workers and employers, adding to the autonomy of workers and adaptability of work places, promoting skills development and offering increased scope to develop a positive work/life balance.
- European economies have seen increases in a range of employment practices that on one hand challenge the traditional norm of a full-time permanent job with defined working hours, agreed rights and benefits and full inclusion in national social protection systems. New employment relationships include "zero hours", "on-call" or "fly-time only" contracts, "mini-jobs", "portfolio work", voucher based work, civil law contracts, and job sharing arrangements. This is accompanied by a range of contractual forms whereby work is organised through intermediaries including "umbrella companies", "self-employment agencies", "co-employment agencies" or online "crowd sourcing" platforms. In many of these forms, workers are referred to as independent contractors, "associates", "taskers", "partners" or other terminology that sometimes obscures their employment status
- Research⁷ has shown that digitalisation is polarising employment between the highly skilled well paid and low skilled low paid, and that it is the middle income moderate skilled bracket of workers in banking, insurance, administration who are the victims in an increasingly unequal labour market
- Digitalisation has also transformed consumer relations, leading to easy access to goods and services. Consumer satisfaction is high, but there are concerns about the impact of this on the economy and improvements are needed with regards to effective mechanisms for redress.
- Recent reports from Eurofound⁸ and ILO⁹ have helped identify the shift from traditional employment relationships to more non-standard forms of employment over the past decade.

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http://www.liberation.fr/debats/2015/09/03/daniel-cohen-il-faut-une-societe-dans-laquelle-perdre-son-emploi-deviene-un-non-evenement_1375142.

8

[Eurofound, "New forms of employment"](#).

[Eurofound, "Harnessing the crowd - A new form of employment"](#).

9

[ILO, "The changing nature of jobs – World Employment and Social Outlook 2015"](#).

The ILO states that "The ongoing transformation in the employment relationship is having important economic and social repercussions. It contributes to the growing divergence between labour incomes and productivity"

Recommendation

- It is important to promote quality employment, social dialogue and collective bargaining structures wherever possible and address any lack of clarity about the rights and obligations of employers and workers; the employment status of workers; liability for accidents, insurance and professional responsibility; and the applicability of tax, social protections and other regulations
- In line with ILO, there is the need to underline the importance for governments, EU institutions and the social partners to identify and define the new employment forms, develop and adapt policy and legislation to manage the change and ensure positive outcomes guaranteeing a favourable policy and regulatory environment to safeguard the interests of enterprises and working people in all forms of employment.
- It is important to promote quality employment, social dialogue and collective bargaining structures wherever possible and address any lack of clarity about the rights and obligations of employers and workers; the employment status of workers; liability for accidents, insurance and professional responsibility; and the applicability of tax, social protections and other regulations

Digitalisation

- Further examination is required into whether, and to what extent, employees' private and family lives require additional protection in a time of ubiquitous digital and mobile communication, and which measures, whether at national or EU level, are appropriate to limit this universal availability/reachability¹⁰.
- Digitalisation has also transformed consumer relations, leading to easy access to goods and services. Consumer satisfaction is high, but there are concerns about the impact of this on the economy and improvements are needed with regards to effective mechanisms for redress
- The diffusion of ICT skills and familiarity with standard software and global languages create opportunities for European citizens to work for global clients regardless of location, but also poses threats of unequal competition for businesses and workers, in that they must compete with counterparts from low-wage economies for these jobs who may not be adhering to the core ILO labour standards and guaranteeing decent work.

Skills development

- Technological change can enhance skills development, but may also have the potential to deskill workers in traditional occupations. The impact of these developments on skills should be considered as well as an assessment of what provisions for life-long training, re-skilling and up-skilling are required and available to workers under these new relationships.
- Businesses working together with trade unions, CEDEFOP and levels of government must ensure that skills are developed to match the demands of the changing world of work. Effective use of EU Social Fund and other resources in meeting these challenges is vital.
- Ensuring people have the skills required to progress in quality jobs in the face of changing labour markets is a key challenge, and must be a central focus of the future EU skills agenda.
- Assessing how best to adapt skills, and scaling up digital skills for all must be a priority for the EU institutions and public authorities with the active involvement of the social partners at all levels.

[ILO, "Regulating the employment relationship in Europe: A guide to Recommendation" – Employment Relationship Recommendation 20016 \(n° 198\).](#)

¹⁰ [OJ C 13, 15.1.2016, p. 24, point 4.4.](#)

Statistics

- Reliable statistics on these developments are lacking. There is a need for data on the extent of crowd employment, the characteristics of crowd workers, the varieties of self-employment, economically dependent self-employment, bogus self-employment and precarious employment; the size of the "platform economy", the sectors in which it operates and its geographical distribution, comparing the EU's position in the global context.
- Statistics are also needed that enable the impact of new forms of employment relationship on the labour market, polarisation of work, income and economy to be monitored and to inform EU employment policy, including the EU Semester and the 2020 Strategy.

Legal Status of Labour Market Intermediaries

- New forms of employment are developing so rapidly that contractual relationships cannot keep pace, which is why we need to look at their legal status. Clarification of the status of labour market intermediaries and online platforms is urgently required to enable them to be identified in the official statistics, to track their growth and establish which standards, obligations, liabilities and rules of operation should apply and which regulatory bodies should be responsible for inspection and enforcement.
- Differences in the terms and definitions of *worker*, *employee*, *self-employed* and *intern* need to be clarified. There is also the for investigation into the employment status of 'crowd workers' and other new forms of employment relationships, taking into account their ability to negotiate terms, the form of payment (and who determines it) and the ownership of intellectual property produced.
- The investigation should aim to give guidance for Member States to clarify, according to their national practices, the tax, social insurance and employment status of workers and the obligations of these platforms in relation to working hours, pay, holidays, pensions, maternity rights, employer-paid health insurance and other employment rights. The development of partnerships with trade unions, consumer or other representative associations could be helpful in addressing public concerns and seeking redress.

Health and safety

Off-site employment could entail health and safety risks to workers, their clients and the general public.

Work may be done in public spaces or private homes, using dangerous materials and equipment, without adequate instruction or protective clothing. Responsibility for insurance, certification and professional liability could be unclear. Online workers may carry out intensive screen work in unsuitable environments using furniture and equipment that does not meet ergonomic standards.

Research¹¹ has shown that digitalisation is polarising employment between the highly skilled well paid and low skilled low paid, and that it is the middle income moderate skilled bracket of workers in banking, insurance, administration who are the victims in an increasingly unequal labour market.

Social Protection

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http://www.liberation.fr/debats/2015/09/03/daniel-cohen-il-faut-une-societe-dans-laquelle-perdre-son-emploi-devienne-un-non-evenement_1375142.

As labour markets become more fluid, with a growing proportion of workers not knowing in advance when or where they will work, there are growing incompatibilities with national social protection systems which are based on the assumption that clear distinctions can be drawn between the statuses of being "employed" and "unemployed". Such incompatibilities benefit neither businesses nor workers

Research is required into developing social welfare models adapted to cover more flexible labour markets and ensure a sustainable and adequate income to guarantee a decent existence. This should be given consideration in the development of the EU Pillar of Social Rights.



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4. Addressing precarious work

Name of organisation submitting the resolution – General Workers Union

Justification

One of the General Workers Union's aims is to ensure that precarious work is eradicated. Precarious work institutionalizes unequal treatment and corrodes effective access to rights at work. Precariousness is not only affecting the workers but also the future of young people in the labour market, since precariousness is creating uncertainty among them.

Precariousness is one of the main problems in Malta, although some steps have been taken to address this situation. (This was discussed during a seminar held on the 20th October 2016 on how Precarious Work may lead to Poverty, in which NCW had participated and raised issues on how women are being negatively affected by this practice).

The GWU-Equal Opportunities Committee would like to forward its proposals which are in line with GWU's Budget Proposals for 2017:

Issues to be addressed

Discrimination on Subcontractor workers

Subcontractors' workers are often paid less than their colleagues who work directly with the employer of the enterprise. This is a type of discriminatory precarious work, because social security contributions will one day impact employees' pensions entitlement.

Currently workers' social security contributions are only paid for hours worked under their main contractor, but not for those worked under subcontractors. Government and Social partners need to find solutions to eliminate this discrepancy

Equal treatment of temporary workers and those employed directly at their workplace.

Many employers use temporary workers to save on costs. Temporary workers, of which the majority are women, should enjoy the same working conditions as other employees doing the same job in the same workplace.

More and more women are entering the labour market and returning to work after years of staying at home. Unfortunately, very often they are employed with subcontractors and therefore do not benefit from the same benefits as other full-time employees who are directly employed with the enterprise.

Furthermore many are being employed on part-time basis and some cannot work on shift basis because they do not find accessible childcare facilities at night.

Recommendations

- The GWU calls for an investigation into the contractual status of temporary workers and other new forms of work and employment relationships including subcontractual workers taking into account the ability of such workers to negotiate or determine pay, hours and conditions, holidays, pensions, maternity rights, employer-paid health insurance and other employment rights.
- Guidelines are also necessary to clarify possible grey zones linked to employment status in relation to taxation and social insurance.

Developing and professionalising domestic work is of strategic importance to achieving equality at work, because it is mainly women who carry out such work and who need childcare services, care for the elderly and home-cleaning in order to reach an equal footing with men in their career. These services benefit not only individuals, but also society as a whole. They create new jobs, meet the needs of an ageing society and help people reconcile their private and professional lives. They improve quality of life and social inclusion and make it easier for the elderly to remain in their own homes.

Recommendations

- **Unions, employers' organisations and direct employment of employees by families**, as well as **works councils**, need to take the necessary measures to promote professional equality, for services which create jobs and negotiate a financial contribution from businesses in order to promote a better work-life balance for all and to:
 - promote the image of services to the family and upgrade jobs in this field
 - promote training for those involved and certification of the skills acquired
 - work towards setting up structures to bring services to the family together and organise them, while respecting traditions and differences between countries
 - organise domestic worker and employer representation

At national level, social partners need to collaborate with government to

- ✓ legalise undeclared and/or precarious domestic work by means of fiscal aid measures and simple declaration schemes to make family-work a job like any other
- ✓ combat stereotypes to ensure that care work and household tasks are seen as activities for both men and women
- ✓ establish a general framework to encourage the emergence and development of a professionalised sector for services to the family, in accordance with the specific features and cultural practices of each Member State
- ✓ eliminate the legal barriers that are currently significantly reducing the declared, direct employment of employees by families.

The European Commission, the OECD and the ILO need work together with the social partners to further develop appropriate provisions on decent working conditions and protection for workers under other new working relationships, in particular to maximise

quality employment opportunities that can arise from the digitalisation of our economies for both men and women.

New forms of employment are developing so rapidly that contractual relationships cannot keep pace, which is why we need to look at their legal status. Clarification of the status of labour market intermediaries and online platforms is urgently required to enable them to be identified in the official statistics, to track their growth and establish which standards, obligations, liabilities and rules of operation should apply and which regulatory bodies should be responsible for inspection and enforcement.

The investigation should aim to give guidance for Member States to clarify, according to their national practices, the tax, social insurance and employment status of workers and the obligations of these platforms in relation to working hours, pay, holidays, pensions, maternity rights, employer-paid health insurance and other employment rights.

Although an EU level approach would be beneficial, most actions will need to be carried out at national, sectoral or workplace level.