



Resolutions

NCW Annual General Meeting

January 2019



National Council of Women

Affiliated to the International Council of Women

Pope Pius XII Flats
Mountbatten Street
Blata 1 - Bajda HMR 02
MALTA

Tel: 21248881 – 21 246982
Fax: 21 246982
ncwmalta@camline.net.mt
<http://www.ncwmalta.com>

Foreword

Dear Colleagues,

As in previous years, the National Council of Women together with its affiliated organisations is presenting their Resolutions on which the Council plans its yearly programme of policy and action. 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. As in previous years the 2019 Resolutions that have been approved at the Annual General Meeting held in January 2019 and are presented to government, various authorities and social partners

Over the years, NCW Resolutions have been a vital tool for the Council to bring about changes for a better way of life in several aspects. This year, NCW Resolutions made specific references to Migration, especially Women Asylum Seekers, Life Balance and the Gender Pay Gap , Future Work and Digitalisation, Paid Paternity Leave and Domestic Violence to mention a few. There is also the reaffirmation of resolutions presented in previous years, but which NCW believes are still relevant today and therefore still require our attention and the pressure on authorities to ensure that changes take place in a responsible manner.

The National Council of Women and its affiliated organisations continue to be a dynamic force of energy, never ceasing to bring about the necessary change for the benefit of society.

As President of NCW, I encourage you to read these resolutions and acknowledge their relevance. Our consolidated aim must be one - *that change happens!*

Mary Gaerty

Mary Gaerty
NCW President



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1. Work Life balance of working parents and caregivers and the Gender Pay Gap in a Changing Society

Name of organisation submitting resolution

National Council of Women

Justification/s (reason/s and current situation/s to be addressed)

- On 26 April 2017, the Commission adopted a proposal for a European Pillar of Social Rights, which includes a proposal for a directive to support work-life balance for working parents and carers alongside a set of non-legislative proposals, which is currently being addressed both by the EU Commission and at the European Parliament (Rapporteur David Casa MEP)
- A determining factor contributing to the underrepresentation of women in the labour market, besides discrimination in access to work and in their employment status and payment and in the types of work open to them, is the difficulty of balancing work and family responsibilities.
- When they have children, women tend to work less hours in paid employment and spend more time fulfilling unpaid care tasks. Moreover, there is an increasing tendency to extend working hours until late in the evening and a prevalence in certain sectors of night work or work on public holidays and this makes it difficult for workers to reconcile work with their duties towards children and other relatives or persons from their immediate circle in need of care or support.
- The directive addresses needs for proactive policies aimed at fostering shared responsibility of both parents for childcare and care for relatives between men and women. Studies also show that involving men in care responsibilities benefits families as well as Europe's economy and competitiveness.
- Concerns: NCW seriously questions how a woman can care for the children elderly relatives and work at the same time

Recommendations

Boosting women's participation in the labour market would also improve businesses' access to skilled labour and talent, helping to ensure the full potential of women at a time when the EU's workforce is shrinking, the population is ageing and the demographic curve remains a serious challenge for public finances. These policies should also focus on creating incentives for employers to increase labour supply, on providing childcare support and on various forms of leave and flexible working arrangements.

Paternity leave

There is the need to address the lack of uptake of paternity leave by introducing an **individual entitlement to non-transferable paternity leave** of at least ten working days, paid at no less than the level of the existing sick pay entitlement. This can have a positive impact on the uptake of parental leave by fathers.

The compensation should be adequate to encourage fathers to take their responsibility as well as give parents more choice both before and after the birth of their child, taking into account national practices regarding maternity pay.

- Initiatives and campaigns by NGOs and government should be undertaken to ensure a 'paternal leave' culturally acceptable, which will be a means of changing attitudes, paving the way for a better distribution of home and work responsibilities
- Government should introduce legislation whereby paternal leave is part of a 'parental leave' package, e.g. if the total parental leave allowance were 12 months, the father needs to take at least 1 month, otherwise the total package shrinks to 11 months. Examples can be found in Northern European countries where implementation of paternal leave alone was not incentive enough for fathers to go through the hassle at their workplace
- As a start, the surplus of the current Maternity Leave fund could be used to cover the cost of paternity leave (ten working days).
- In the case of the private sector, a separate fund similar to the Maternity Fund needs to be discussed and agreed upon by all stakeholders to cover the cost of paternity leave for at least 10 working days. The discussion should also focus on examples of good practice and on the positive economic advantages that such a measure would bring to their company, also through carefully planned flexible work arrangements

NCW is aware that businesses, especially SMEs and micro businesses, may encounter organisational difficulties due to the extension of the age of the child from eight to twelve years for parental leave purposes. **NCW will be studying possibilities to reduce costs**

NCW believes **that the proposal for the individualisation of parental leave entitlements and their non-transferability**, a decent salary compensation for at least the level of sick pay, as well as non-discrimination provisions, can have a positive impact on the uptake of parental leave by fathers.

Carers' Leave

The lack of adequate provision for leave to provide care for relatives with support needs, also contributes to the unequal distribution of care responsibilities, with women often exclusively shouldering the care burden. This hampers their physical and mental health, social inclusion and participation in the labour market and consequently contributes to them having inadequate pension entitlements.

NCW **advocates work-life balance measures covering workers throughout their lives, including women belonging to the "sandwich generation", i.e. those who find themselves with care responsibilities for relatives from more than one generation.** Lack of care provision often forces these workers, especially women, out of paid employment just a few years before retirement, with the concomitant barriers to re-entering the labour market after the age of 50.

Leave for individual carers should not serve as a substitute for professional, accessible, affordable and high-quality community-based care services, which will also greatly contribute to future economic development.

Carers should **present a certificate of completing the relevant training** before they are employed and with a probation period.

Management of childcare facilities should also be carried out **by trained professionals** with the requested certification according to EU standards

Mothers are still overburdened with family responsibilities, and yet as a result of accessible childcare facilities, **mothers are extending their working hours** with the result that mothers are working overall longer hours at the workplace and still have to cope with work at home, with **less quality time for their children**. It is important that **men contribute/ adapt to family responsibilities due to the mother's increased workload or not**

It is still “a challenge for working mothers to keep a full-time job and raise a family,” particularly when working hours do not coincide with school hours – an issue that has often been raised but so far nothing has been done about it. Coupled with the problems resulting from school hours there is the need to address child supervision school transport, which is also a barrier to working hours of parents. Who will finance a scheme similar to the Maternity Leave fund?

An important aspect of **care for people with disabilities** is separating professional care from family care in an attempt to create a situation in which the burden on families can be alleviated as much as possible. However, regardless of the form of care in question, carers must have access to the social security system.

Flexible working arrangements

Flexibility in working arrangements is essential to enable businesses to adapt their workforce to a changing economic context. It is also a useful tool for enhancing performance and productivity¹, as well as for enabling workers to manage their work-life balance. It is therefore important that social dialogue at local and sectoral level tackles these aspects in order to put in place forms of work that enable a balance between private and work life.

Flexible working arrangements should not be treated as a "women's issue" by focusing on mothers or women that need to care for their dependent relatives. Businesses must encourage flexible forms of work for both men and women and contribute to a cultural evolution that is in line with men's and women's aspirations and that also promotes greater professional equality. Flexible working arrangements must also be fully reversible, employee-friendly and available in all forms of contracts. **Effectively enforcing the right to return to the original working pattern is particularly important in this context.**

Introducing the possibility for workers to make use of (i) a reduction in working hours, (ii) flexible work schedules and (iii) remote working possibilities can meet most workers' needs and **incorporate a life-cycle approach**. These issues should be tackled through social dialogue and collective bargaining at the level closest to the situation in question.

It is also important to **address fiscal disincentives**, which will complement and support the other measures, in particular, the identification of country-specific obstacles resulting from

¹

Chung, H., (2017) *Work Autonomy, Flexibility and Work Life Balance*: final report accessible at: <http://wafproject.org/research-outputs/final-report/>.

gender-biased tax benefit systems and proposes that these be addressed through recommendations issued in the context of the European Semester.

.NCW agrees with the need to establish a minimum European playing-field **by introducing an individual entitlement to carers' leave of at least five days per year, paid at the level of sick pay.** However, this is only a first step and more needs to help families cope better with growing care responsibilities. The introduction of this individual entitlement should be linked to the development of support mechanisms for carers.

The impact of digitalisation

The impact of the digitalisation of the workplace and employment relationships may go as far as reshaping traditional working patterns. Further reflection is needed on the way in which leave for care purposes is traditionally viewed as the pivotal choice for families to balance work and family life. All too often, it is women who take up flexible working arrangements to cope with care responsibilities while continuing to work. This hampers their progress within their place of work, in terms of both their remuneration and their professional development.

Women and Technology

Women are still under-represented in SET including science, engineering, technology architecture and skilled roles in the construction sector. A scarcity of role models in the technology spheres is another concern. There is still the need to further adopt plans and strong measures to address the issue of inequality in these sectors.

Using Facebook, Twitter and other new social media can encourage women to actively communicate and raise awareness of the profile of women working in these fields, which are fast providing the jobs/careers of the future

Artificial Intelligence and Robotics, New Computing technologies, Blockchain, Biotechnologies, Virtual and technologies are some of the areas which need to be taken up by women. Retention of female employees and recruitment in these fields needs to be a priority.

The role of civil society actors in addition to the need for high-quality, accessible and affordable public services, including care services for children, older relatives and other dependents, **the social economy and the non-governmental sector** can make a useful contribution to providing services to support work-life balance. In many cases, without their efforts, service provision would not be ensured.

Other measures to be considered

Cost of free/shared childcare services from 3 years to compulsory school age - Can a scheme similar to the Maternity Fund (Malta) be a solution

Extension of School Hours to match working hours

Provision of School Transport - child supervision to and from school – subsidized



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2. Challenges and Opportunities for SMEs in future work and digitalization

Name of organisation submitting the resolution

National Council of Women

Justification/s (reason/s and current situation/s to be addressed)

While the risk of cyber attacks is growing, most European companies are still unprepared and unaware of the risk. This was highlighted in a recent study (*The Hague Centre for Strategic Studies*) commissioned by the European Economic and Social Committee. Small and medium-sized companies (SMEs) are the most exposed, as they often cannot afford to invest adequately in cybersecurity. The level of investment in cybersecurity overall is insufficient. Most businesses do not realise its importance until after experiencing a security breach.

This study examines the impact of cyber-related threats and challenges on corporate Europe and the degree of engagement of European businesses in tackling issues at stake. Although the new digitization era offers huge economic and social opportunities, it also changes the nature and magnitude of cyber risks and creates new vulnerabilities cyber attackers seek to exploit.

Lack of awareness, underdeveloped infrastructure, high investment costs as well as skills shortages and mismatches – these are some of the challenges that SMEs are facing when trying to benefit from the digital revolution. (*EESC Conference "How to support businesses in the digital age – SMEs go digital" in collaboration with the Austrian Federal Economic Chamber Vienna 24.10.2018*)

According to the Global State of Information Security Survey, four out of five companies have experienced at least one cybersecurity incident over the past year. Finance, healthcare, retail, business services and information technology remain the sectors that are most often targeted by cyber-criminals. Almost 70% of European companies do not understand the extent of their exposure to cyber risks.

Digitalisation and technological developments including ecommerce, present valuable opportunities for SMRs but also pose important challenges prompting change in culture, activities and business models

The value of entrepreneurs and companies and their crucial role in creating employment and growth, especially among women, must be better promoted including in devising a special Pillar of Entrepreneurs Rights

(*EESC Opinion INT/832 SME, "think small first" 17/01/2018*)

Challenges

Cybersecurity remains underfunded

Neither individual Member States nor private enterprises seem to be backing up their cybersecurity with appropriate resources. There is a visible gap between EU countries in terms of knowledge, awareness and capacity to deal with cybersecurity. Estonia, France and United Kingdom lead by example.

Bottlenecks in public and private policies

Even though the European Union has launched numerous initiatives to improve cyber resilience and response, a fragmented regulatory environment remains one of the main obstacles to enhancing cybersecurity at EU level.

Other challenges include discrepancies in threat intelligence sharing policies, an absence of coordinated vulnerability disclosure (CVD) at EU level and lack of trust when it comes to sharing information between the public and private sector.

There is also the need to address the challenges associated with implementing the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). Companies were not sufficiently aware of and prepared for the GDPR entering into force, and lack the know-how and systems to fulfil its requirements.

With the implementation of the EU's General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), companies will soon be required to report data breaches to national data protection authorities and – where the threat of harm is substantial – to affected individuals, as the failure to do so could result in staggering fines, organizations should be preparing to comply with all aspects of the GDPR.

Recommendations

At EU and National Level

The European Union Agency for Network and Information Security (ENISA) is a centre of expertise for cyber security in Europe. ENISA helps the EU and EU countries to be better equipped and prepared to prevent, detect and respond to information security problems. ENISA's new permanent mandate as proposed by the Commission, will significantly contribute to enhancing the resilience of European systems.

However, the **accompanying provisional budget and resources** allocated to ENISA will not be sufficient for the agency to fulfil its mandate.

ENISA should **prioritise actions to support e-government**, should provide regular reports on the cyber-readiness of Member States focusing on sectors identified in the NIS Directive and monitor the performance and decision-making of national certification supervisory authorities.

Digitalisation is more and more necessary for SMEs. Half of SMEs see digitalisation as an opportunity to expand their product and service portfolio. The same proportion believe digitalisation supports new business models. For 79% of SMEs, digitalisation allows product optimisation. Artificial Intelligence and Robotics, New Computing technologies, Blockchain and distributed ledger, Energy capture, storage and transmission, Biotechnologies, Virtual and Augmented technologies are some of the necessary 'tools' for the future, for SMEs to remain competitive

Further simplification of electronic interaction between businesses as well as between the public service and businesses would also be beneficial. In that context, the representative of the European Commission outlined the potential of the eIDAS regulation (Trust Services and Electronic identification) for SMEs.

Wider use of the e-invoice or e-signature is just one of the basic examples of how digitalisation allows costs to be cut and efficiency to be improved.

A number of **good practices** in improving cybersecurity of private sector, such as public-private partnerships and 'cyber communities' that bring different stakeholders together are proving to be successful

Public-private partnerships have proven effective in dealing with cyber threats. Such partnerships can draw from strengths that private and public agencies possess, which are often complementary

'Cyber communities' have been successful in bringing a broad selection of stakeholders together, enhancing trust among them, encouraging the exchange of information and experience, as well as the pooling of knowledge and resources, and incorporating universities as well as civil society.

Lack of digital skills is another factor hampering digitalisation of SMEs. The dual education model could be part of the solution to that issue. Moreover, an increasing shortage of ITC specialists is making it even more difficult to enhance cybersecurity levels. According to the study, by 2020 there will be over 750 000 vacancies for ITC experts. Female entrepreneurs should be at the forefront in acquiring digital skills which are resulting in the most highly paid jobs/careers of the future

The creation of an EU-certified curriculum for high schools and professionals should be a priority. The human factor constitutes one of the most important causes of cyber accidents. By means of certifications, courses, on-the-job trainings and consultancy services, the private sector also plays an important role in educating cybersecurity specialists.

By identifying **new professions linked to digitalisation** and by creating **adequate apprenticeship programmes**, businesses and schools can help to adjust curriculums to the market's needs.

There is a need **to build a strong cyber skills base and improve cyber risk management** also through awareness raising campaigns among individuals and businesses

Upgrading of ICT skills has to be ongoing and for all ages, in particular for girls

More initiatives need to be provided through relevant courses to educate the 30-40 age bracket

There is the need address the lack of information about such services in particular for adults

More effective measures to address the following gaps :

- **Early school leavers ; this is partly being addressed by the MCAST Foundation Course**
- **Career Guidance personnel need to be trained to make use of practical interactive tools, which technology today can provide, to address in a more comprehensive manner the challenges that our students are facing in a fast changing society**

- **Students need to be informed to make responsible choices for the future, matching their studies with their goals .**
- **More attention needs to be given to non-formal learning, which can be offered by NGOs and through sports initiatives**
- **More collaboration with Agenzija Zghazagh**
- **Educating parents as learning partners with young people**

Cybersecurity challenges, competitions and prizes constitute another strategy by both the private and the public sector. They have been successful in helping to increase the pool of ICT talent, stimulating interest in cybersecurity and combating the shortage of skills. They also provide the cybersecurity industry with an advertising platform and a means to come into contact with potential future employees.



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3a A Holistic Approach to Migration

Organisation submitting the resolution

National Council of Women

Justification

- Recent Eurostat survey findings reveal that 83% of the Maltese population consider migration as the highest concern and an issue which the EU is not effectively addressing.
- Malta, a relatively small island has received 19,00 asylum seekers since 2002; however only 1/3 of these have remained in Malta. There is therefore the need to understand better Malta's situation even though for the last months there has been decrease in the number of irregular migrants arriving in Malta.
- The situation is getting worse with migration flows from East and West Africa, with asylum seekers going through a very complex migration - that is going through one country (in transit) and moving on in difficult conditions to reach a European host country.
- The recent Balkan Route and Migration to Eastern European countries and Turkey which is very complex especially as a result of the new phenomenon of migrating units as families, is causing hardship and needs to be prioritised at EU level
- The development of migrant smuggling and the risk of the presence of terrorists amongst the asylum seekers is causing alarm and fear amongst the population in the various EU Member States
- Recent news of the state of the biggest refugee camp in Greece is an alarm call!
- Refugee camps in Syria, Turkey and Lebanon are in similar inhuman conditions
- The recent incident of 49 men, women and children migrants remain stuck on a boat within sight of the Maltese shore has raised our concern and we are not satisfied with the temporary solution that Italy and Malta are facing.
- The increase in anti-immigration and subsequent practices are on the increase amongst 'extremist' political views
- The Hungarian Presidency, for the first 6 months of 2019 advocating anti-immigration policies is another big concern

Recommendations

Addressing issues at EU level

There is urgent the need of a holistic approach at EU level regarding burden sharing as well as strong measures to be taken by the European Commission to address the needs in countries of origin, in particular projects and funding to strengthen the economic situation, employment policies and working conditions and not least the non-functioning social situation and agreement to be reached by all Member States.

EU member states need to define measures supporting professional training, agreements with countries of origin, and matching labour supply and demand for the economic development of countries of origin

Now more than ever is the time to reform the Dublin 111 regulation to provide the necessary measures for a permanent relocation and strong measures to combat human trafficking and smuggling - a modern day slavery,

According to EU law on Fundamental Human Rights and the Council of Europe Convention as well as the International Humanitarian Convention, all asylum seekers are entitled to protection and have equal rights with the people of host countries including housing, education, health services and employment.

Immediate action needs to be taken with regards to the Schengen regulations in view of the disproportionate number of asylum seekers and economic migrants attempting to enter EU countries without visas

The current situation calls for strengthening the mandate of the Frontex agency and the strengthening of a maritime rescue operation in the Mediterranean.

There is urgent need to develop pro-active policies which facilitate legal migration – reaching Europe in a safe way; third country nationals in decent employment will be in a position to support the economy of their country of origin

Evaluating if the Blue Card directive fits the purpose to make Europe a more attractive place to work for skilled workers. Addressing barriers such as reducing the time it is taking for the documents of irregular migrants to be processed and reducing time in detention centres

Bureaucracy and barriers to get their recognition of qualifications recognized, resulting in a lengthy process together with difficulties in finding jobs and progressing in their career as well as **study opportunities to obtain the necessary the University of Malta qualifications also need to be seriously addressed**

Recent incidents of ‘boat migrants’ seeking safety in European countries call for all member states to reach agreement on burden sharing – the risks, hardships and fatal results should be addressed in a humane manner

The sociological perspective in Malta

- **There is the need to address the different perceptions through the language used when speaking about irregular/illegal migration,**
- The media coverage is very often sensational in reporting on issues of burden sharing and the ‘limited structures’ in Malta to assist migrants in settling down.
- More discussion on xenophobia and racism is necessary to change mentalities

Integration

- **The integration of migrants does not mean only integration in the labour market. A number of aspects linked with integration include: education, housing, family reunification, social integration as well as the importance of participation in the life of the community, and proper monitoring mechanisms to evaluate existing policies and planning new policies.**
- **Maltese citizens should also learn about other cultures. Schools at all levels should have programs of intercultural dialogue.**
- Employers are having difficulties in recruiting employees with the necessary qualifications as well as highly specialized employees, as many posts are not being accepted by the Maltese either as they lack the necessary qualifications or because they do not want to work in what is considered ‘low paid’ jobs. Migrants are very often filling in these job vacancies.
- The Social Economy which SMEs can be beneficial to vulnerable groups including third country nationals
- **Policies regarding employment opportunities should reflect qualifications and competences regardless of race**



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3b Migration and the situation of women asylum seekers

Committee/Organisation submitting the resolution
National Council of Women

Justification/s (reason/s and current situation/s to be addressed)

- The events of the Arab Spring gave rise to conflict and developments across the Euromed Region resulting in the emergence of a significant conflict environment mainly due to terrorism and migration and which therefore needs to be addressed in a more comprehensive manner.
- The central role of women in these events and in the democratisation during the transitional periods, in the drafting of national constitutions and reform of current laws must be safeguarded and sustained through good governance, to prevent setbacks in gender equality
- The development, growth and competitiveness in the Southern and Eastern Mediterranean region depend on making full use of the human capital of men and women at all levels and in all sectors of economic activity.
- This requires member states to commit themselves, in accordance with their international obligations², to the principle of gender equality in all spheres, the elimination of barriers to the participation of women in economic, social, cultural and political life and the implementation of mechanisms of good governance.
- The varying circumstances in different countries in the Mediterranean region, particularly the conflict and instability affecting many southern and Eastern Mediterranean countries require that the European Commission (EC) and governments of the countries of the Euro-Mediterranean region to develop shared solutions to these challenges

Recommendations

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

² Arab Region Shadow Report, Beijing +20 Platform of Action, The General Arab Women Federation

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

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

- the ratification of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) (1979);
- the ratification of the additional Palermo Protocol on trafficking as a form of violence;
- the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (ICC) on acts of violence, including, war crimes considered as weapons of warfare and acts of torture;
- the Council of Europe Istanbul Convention on Domestic Violence;
- the ILO Conventions on decent work, migrant domestic workers;
- full implementation of the recommendations of the Final Declaration of the UfM Ministerial Conference on Women held in Paris on 12 September 2013;

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

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

Violence Against Women and Trafficking:

- In cases of migration, asylum, trafficking and anti-discrimination issues, there is the need to address incidents of violence against domestic workers by persons living in the same household.
- All countries should take immediate action to prohibit **honour crimes** and on both shores of the Mediterranean, to eradicate female gender mutilation, (FGM) by introducing effective sanctions for perpetrators, while national authorities urgently need to reinforce the implementation of the law along with effective campaigns to change societal attitudes.

- There is also urgent need for measures to repeal articles in the law that exempt rapists or kidnappers from penalties if they marry their victims and to abolish judicial discretion, which gives a judge the right to object to an article in the penal code concerning penalties for rape and other forms of sexual abuse, including honour killing.
- Tools for tackling **sexual abuse by family members** should be adopted and implemented, including witness protection programmes and help for women victims in police stations, hospitals and courts.
- **There is also the need for measures to protect Maltese women from sexual abuse and harassment by male migrants. Effective penalties through legislation that serve as strong deterrents also to others should be put in practice**
- **Prevention through education - Integration programs should include induction courses on Maltese culture and related legislation regarding any type of gender abuse, highlighting differences in culture**

Women in Armed Conflict:

- Women often have fewer resources than men to protect themselves and, with children, they frequently make up the majority of the displaced and refugee population. Territorial occupation, armed conflicts and terrorism are resulting in acute poverty in several countries
- Women in conflict stricken areas in the Arab region, including Syria and Iraq and Lebanon are left without much needed services or reparations, while perpetrators are able to avoid accountability and punishment.
- The international communities need to immediately act on the prevailing culture³ of violations against detained women, such as violations committed by the Syrian regime against women in the framework of a deliberate military strategy targeting an entire community. Such acts are in full violation of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court on acts of violence, including war crimes and torture.

NCW calls for the immediate action with the collaboration of local authorities responsible for **refugee camps** to ensure the protection of women and children from violence, hardship and poverty and more recently cold weather as well as to prevent practices of violence such as refugees opting to marry off their daughters at a young age as a form of protection or as a result severe economic need.

The Girl Child

- Enforcing laws regarding legal age of marriage
- Outlawing political exploitation of girls during demonstrations and sit-ins and prohibit obliging them to participate in wars

4. Euromediterranean Human Rights Network, www.euromedrights.org, Detention of Women in Syria: a weapon of war and terror

Women and Health:

Finally there are several issues relating to the health of women and girls in the region that need to be urgently addressed including:

- access to good quality care,
- effectively reducing maternal death,
- addressing sexual and reproductive health and HIV and
- adequately responding to the required policies to close the gender gap in health.
- Measures should be taken to address adolescent health, and in particular HIV, especially in areas where a culture of early marriage exists.
- School health clinics, which offer services such as counselling, information on sexual health and referrals to specialised counselling or treatment are already doing excellent work in countries such as Morocco and Egypt.



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4. 'Fulfil the promise of a comprehensive response to violence against women'

Name of organisation submitting resolution
National Council of Women

Justification

'All women and girls have the right to live free from violence. Unfortunately, this is not the reality. One in three women has experienced physical or sexual violence – 22% at the hands of their partner. More than half of all women have been sexually harassed with 20% of young women reporting online sexual harassment", said DunjaMijatović, Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights, on the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women 2018'

Recommendations

- **We need to ensure that violence against women no longer thrives in secrecy** - the greatest challenge. Our conviction and commitment in believing that violence against women is preventable if we all work together to deal with the complex problems and challenges is crucial.
- **Intimate partner violence must be regarded as a public and not a private issue.** The law in all EU Member States should treat rape within marriage the same as other incidents of rape, and should respond to domestic violence as a matter of serious public concern.
- **Cases of rape must be brought to court even if the perpetrator marries the victim.**
- Police, healthcare professionals, employers and specialist victim support services need to be trained, **properly resourced and given the necessary powers to reach out to victims.**
- **The police and other relevant services should be trained to recognise and understand the impact of psychological abuse on victims** to ensure all forms of violence against women (and girls) in varied settings are recognised, recorded and acted on.

- The police should be encouraged to routinely recognise and investigate cases where cyberstalking and cyberharassment plays a role. Internet and social media platforms should proactively assist victims of cyberharassment to report abuse and be encouraged to limit unwanted behaviour.
- Specialist support services are required to address the needs of victims who suffer from negative feelings in the aftermath of victimisation, which can include self-blame and a sense of shame.
- **Campaigns on and responses to violence against women must be directed at men as well as women. Men need to be positively engaged in initiatives that confront how some men use violence against women.**
- **Violence among women does not occur in isolation** – it affects the different members of the family, different age groups and individuals from a wide range of socio-economic backgrounds and nationalities.
- The need for **clearly identifying and understanding the needs of the victim**: child, adolescent, mother, parents or elderly person who are at risk as well as the perpetrator/s themselves is one of the first steps in the initial stages of preventive measures
- There is the need for more trained professionals to deal with complex situations in addressing **the needs of children in abusive relationships, children witnessing sexual abuse by father** and addressing the multiple needs: psychological, social and physical of the mother in situations of abuse by children and by father
- There is urgent need **to identify situations where children cannot express themselves**, need protection, especially very young children that are too young to articulate their ‘pain’ (they can only cry) or children with disabilities including those with speech difficulties and their fear to communicate. Early detection, especially in schools can help children get out of these situations before it is too late
- Other **situations where violence is difficult to prove such as psychological violence**, power and control are very difficult to prove whether in case of violence on children or on mother. Professionals specialized in dealing with domestic violence cases can be approached by members of the community – we all have a role to play in eradicating violence in the family
- The workplace can be an excellent environment to support women in situations of violence in various ways. **Employers need to strengthening policies of ‘for a safe workplace’** through which victims of domestic violence or harassment at the workplace can find the necessary support for integration at work and in society.
- **The risk of violence in Homes for the Elderly also needs to be addressed.** Elderly are at risk of facing various types of violence from relatives. Training for all staff in Homes for the Elderly with emphasis on the caring skills is lacking in some of these homes,

besides problems arising from foreign care workers who do not speak Maltese or English and lack of a peaceful environment.

- We need to **develop more effective education/skills programs for inmates of corrective facilities to be able to integrate in the family and in society when their prison term comes to an end.**
- **Special programs for youths, male and female and first-time offenders** need to be regularly monitored and updated.
- **Programs addressing substances abusers** should to be evaluated and adapted to the individual needs of the inmates who may have been perpetrators themselves or victims of violence
- **Today the media, including the print media and all social media are revealing cases of violence against female personalities from all backgrounds who are coming out in the open seeking justice against perpetrators who have abused them sexually.** Women are no longer silent in these situations. This serves as a strong deterrent where men can no longer feel sure that their actions will never be challenged in a court of law and will escape justice
- **The role of the media is becoming more crucial in *portraying actions that will prevent violence against women such as* condoning violence against women; promoting women's independence and decision-making; challenging gender stereotypes and strengthening positive, equal and respectful relations.**
- **The media should be held responsible through fines, to refrain from victim-blaming and to engage in active language (man raped woman) rather than passive language (woman has been raped)**
- **In cases of rape, young girls and women need to be trained on how to preserve, save evidence, immediately, especially before they reach a police station (for ample taking)**
- **The importance of using more effective means of communication (media education) in schools at all levels - administration, teaching staff, PSD and School Counsellors in collaboration with Domestic Violence Commission professionals** that can effectively challenge the manipulation techniques of today's media, internet, mobile telephony and social media in particular.



National Council of Women

Affiliated to the International Council of Women

Pope Pius XII Flats
Mountbatten Street
Blata 1 - Bajda HMR 02
MALTA

Tel: 21248881 – 21 246982
Fax: 21 246982
ncwmalta@camline.net.mt
<http://www.ncwmalta.com>

5. Increase in paid paternity leave for fathers.

Name of organisation submitting resolution

Malta Union of Midwives and Nurses (MUMN)

Justification/s (reason/s and current situation/s to be addressed)

- a. More often paid leave is often associated as an issue that only matters for working mothers. Locally fathers are granted a full paid paternity leave of one day on the birth of a child. In the public sector, the paternity leave duration is 5 working days after live or stillbirth.
- b. Longer paid paternity leave of several weeks, can decrease the level of stress, especially mental stress on both parents, especially if it is the first time parents and mothers passing through difficult and traumatic births. Moreover it can promote parent-child bonding, improve different health and social outcomes of children, as well as gender equity.
- c. Longer paid paternity leave provide a real advantage for working families. Research shows that paid paternity leave makes it easier for fathers, like mothers to balance their responsibilities at work and at home.

Recommendation/s

- Increase in paid paternity leave for fathers by several weeks – 2 weeks or more. Studies show that longer paid leave will give fathers more time to bond with their children and will be more involved with their children from an early start.
- Initiatives and campaigns by NGOs and government should be undertaken to ensure a 'paternal leave' culturally acceptable, which will be a means of changing attitudes, paving the way for a better distribution of home and work responsibilities
- Government should introduce legislation whereby paternal leave is part of a 'parental leave' package, e.g. if the total parental leave allowance were 12 months, the father needs to take at least 1 month, otherwise the total package shrinks to 11 months. Examples can be found in Northern European countries where implementation of paternal leave alone was not incentive enough for fathers to go through the hassle at their workplace
- As a start, the surplus of the current Maternity Leave fund could be used to cover the cost of paternity leave (ten working days).

- In the case of the private sector, a separate fund similar to the Maternity Fund needs to be discussed and agreed upon by all stakeholders to cover the cost of paternity leave for at least 10 working days. The discussion should also focus examples of good practice and on the positive economic advantages that such a measure would bring to their company, also through carefully planned flexible work arrangements



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ncwmalta@camline.net.mt
<http://www.ncwmalta.com>

6. Sick leave in view of children's illness

Name of organisation submitting resolution
Malta Union of Midwives and Nurses

Justification/s (reason/s and current situation/s to be addressed)

- a. Health care providers frequently recommend that acutely sick children stay at home from school, and if necessary see a medical doctor. Otherwise their illnesses can worsen or spread to others, health care costs increase, and small problems can become serious threats, with the consequences of hospitalisation or contagion issues.
- b. When dealing with sick children, many employed parents often need to take time off, which means that frequently they are losing income or even worse risk losing their job.
- c. Parents need to meet their children's health care needs without risking their jobs. Evidence show that employees, who receive paid sick leave, due to child illness are substantially less likely, than employees without such benefits, to send a sick child at school.

Recommendation/s

- a. When children are sick enough to require medical attention, we need parents to be with them. Outpatient facilities and hospitals depend on parents to supervise their children, transport them to and from appointments, fill out forms, monitor symptoms, communicate with medical doctors, collect laboratory samples, administer therapies, and provide comfort during tests and procedures. When children become patients, parents become health care providers, and without them, the paediatric health care system would grind to a halt.

b. Government approaches should include mandating:-

- a) unpaid family leave with job protection (protection from being fired) for extended absences;

- b) paid sick-leave with job protection for frequent or intermediate-length absences, and paid sick days leave that can be used for incidental brief absences to care for ill family members.
- c) Flexible schedules and telecommuting can help, especially for parents with a chronically ill child.

The risk of fraud can be minimized through employer policies requiring certification of health conditions. Furthermore, studies have shown that most employees use these types of benefits to deal with the real demands of real illnesses.

The Health Care System relies on parents to meet these demands on behalf of their children. The MUMN suggests that organisations (whether public/private sector) must ensure that their employees are able to balance the needs of their growing families without worrying about work or finances.

Evidence shows that people perform better at work when they're not worrying about home issues. When policies are employee - centred and allow employees to be supported during the changes in their lives and that includes the challenges of parenting; employees return to work more focused and dedicated.



Documents

Consequence of legislation on prostitution – A Study

NCW Annual General Meeting

January 2019

ASSESSMENT OF TEN YEARS OF DUTCH & SWEDISH POLICIES ON PROSTITUTION (EWL)

The Netherlands (Regularisation of Prostitution)

In 2000, the Netherlands lifted the ban on brothels. Since then, several studies on the impact of the decriminalisation of pimping have shown that the situation of persons in prostitution has worsened.

The study carried out for the Ministry of Justice unveiled that:

- “There has been no significant improvement of the situation of persons in prostitution”.
- “The prostitutes’ emotional well-being is now lower than in 2001 on all measured aspects”.
- “The use of sedatives has increased”.
- Requests for leaving the industry were in high demand, while only 6% of municipalities offer such assistance.
- 50% to 90% of the women in licensed prostitution “work involuntarily”.

In 2008 data collected by the national police force (KLPD) in a study on the sector of legalised prostitution showed that:

- All the women, who have been exploited with extreme violence in the Netherlands, were in the legal, licensed, taxpaying and State sanctioned brothels.
- Organised crime kept the control over the legal sector of the sex industry.

In 2011, Lodewijk Asscher, Labour deputy mayor of Amsterdam, stated that decriminalising procuring has been a “national error”.

A report made jointly by the City of Amsterdam and the Ministry of Justice shows indeed that a great part of the legal sector of the sex industry perpetuates exploitation and trafficking in human beings.

Decriminalising procuring and legalising the sex industry did not prevent an increase in ‘hidden’ or ‘illegal’ prostitution. In 2010, a government body in charge of crime prevention showed that only 17% of the prostitution advertisements published in newspapers and on the internet are placed by licensed brothels.

Sweden (Nordic Model)

The Swedish government introduced the Nordic Model in 1999.

- This law decriminalises all those that are prostituted
- Provides support services to help exit
- Makes sex buying a criminal offence in order to decrease the demand that drives sex trafficking.

In 2010 the Ministry of Justice in Sweden published an evaluation of this law.

- By tackling the demand, the prohibition to purchase sex, functions as a barrier against the establishment of organised crime, traffickers and pimps in Sweden.
- According to the National Police, the law contributed to the fight against international networks of procurers.
- By tackling the demand and therefore reducing their possibilities to gain from the exploitation of prostitution, Sweden has discouraged criminal networks to invest on its territory.
- The number of persons exploited in street prostitution has halved since 1999, while it tripled in Denmark and Norway for the same period.
- There is no evidence of more Swedish men going abroad to buy sex.
- The number of individuals that are sold via Internet web pages/ads is much larger in neighbouring countries such as Denmark and Norway.
- The proportion of prostituted persons from third countries did not increase in the same way it exploded in neighbouring countries.
- There has been no increase in ‘hidden’ prostitution.
- Mentalities have completely changed as there is today more than 70% of public support to the law, even though the majority of the Swedish population was opposed to the prohibition of the purchase of sex before the adoption of the law.
- The support is stronger amongst youth: this shows that the law has played a role in conveying norms and values.
- The prohibition acts as a deterrent for the sex buyers resulting in a decrease in demand.
- The Swedish police consider that the legislation prevents many men from buying sex.



Reaffirmation of Policy

NCW Annual General Meeting

January 2019



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Pope Pius XII Flats
Mountbatten Street
Blata 1 - Bajda HMR 02
MALTA

Tel: 21248881 – 21 246982
Fax: 21 246982
ncwmalta@camline.net.mt
<http://www.ncwmalta.com>

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 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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Pope Pius XII Flats
Mountbatten Street
Blata 1 - Bajda HMR 02
MALTA

Tel: 21248881 – 21 246982
Fax: 21 246982
ncwmalta@camline.net.mt
<http://www.ncwmalta.com>

2. 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



National Council of Women

Affiliated to the International Council of Women

Pope Pius XII Flats
Mountbatten Street
Blata 1 - Bajda HMR 02
MALTA

Tel: 21248881 – 21 246982
Fax: 21 246982
ncwmalta@camline.net.mt
<http://www.ncwmalta.com>

3. 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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Mountbatten Street
Blata 1 - Bajda HMR 02
MALTA

Tel: 21248881 – 21 246982
Fax: 21 246982
ncwmalta@camline.net.mt
<http://www.ncwmalta.com>

4. 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



National Council of Women

Affiliated to the International Council of Women

Pope Pius XII Flats
Mountbatten Street
Blata 1 - Bajda HMR 02
MALTA

Tel: 21248881 – 21 246982
Fax: 21 246982
ncwmalta@camline.net.mt
<http://www.ncwmalta.com>

5. 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