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Resolutions

NCW Annual General Meeting

January 2020

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 is presenting the collection of the resolutions, which were approved at the Annual General meeting held on the 25th of January 2020. Also included is a set of reaffirmed resolutions from previous years, which we believe should be addressed.

The resolutions are the result of the concerns and discussions raised by the executive committee, individual members and affiliated organisations, during meetings which are held on a monthly basis. The main objective in presenting these resolutions, is to raise awareness and address the issues in order to bring about the change required.

The main challenge for this year is the ever advancing digitalization and its impact on society and especially women. More women need to be encouraged to follow technology based jobs and girls to be persuaded and supported to study the STEM subjects.

Equality remains a highly discussed topic and it is through initiatives such as presenting these concerns and recommendations to the government so that change will happen.

I wish to give special thanks to Vice President, Grace Attard for her dedication and research in compiling the resolutions.

As President of the National Council of Women Malta, I encourage you to read these resolutions and acknowledge their relevance. Our consolidated aim must be one – *that change happens.*

Mary Gaerty
President
National Council of Women

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1.   Bridging the Digital Gender Gap

Name of organization submitting the resolution – National Council of Women

Justification

- Gender equality is not only a fundamental human right. **It is also a keystone of a prosperous, modern economy** that provides sustainable inclusive growth.
- **Recognising that gender equality** is essential for ensuring that men and women can contribute fully **for the betterment of societies and economies at large.**
- G20 Leaders first committed to "women's full economic participation" in Los Cabos in 2012.
- Following the ambitious goal to reduce the gender gap in labour market participation by 25% by 2025 (the 25x25 target) at the 2014 Brisbane Summit, a commitment was taken to implementing a set of policies to improve the quality of women's employment and the provision of support services.
- Since then, as documented by the OECD, most G20 countries have made progress, but much remains to be done. In 2016, the gap in labour market participation rates between men and women aged 15-64 was around 26% for G20 economies.

The Current Situation

The Digital Transformation

Today the digital transformation provides new avenues for the economic empowerment of women and can contribute to greater gender equality. The Internet, digital platforms, mobile phones and digital financial services **offer "leapfrog" opportunities** for all and can help bridge the divide by giving women the possibility to earn additional income, increase their employment opportunities, and access knowledge and general information.

- **We need to seize this opportunity** to foster greater gender equality in the labour market, boost economic growth and build a more inclusive, digital world.
- The road ahead is uphill: today worldwide **some 327 million fewer women than men have a smartphone** and can access the mobile Internet.
- Women are underrepresented in the ICT profession overall. Whereas in the borader workforce women comprise around 45%, the number of women in ICT jobs is around 28%
- **Retention of female employees**: More than half of women in technology occupations quit mid-career (approximately 56%)
  ICT Career Perception and IT Teachers
- **ICT career perception is influenced by how familiar girls are with Computer Studies and its broad application**
- The need to continue to **develop the teaching and expertise skills of teachers** who are teaching Informatics/Computer Science/Information Science
- **Develop** an appropriate suite of **programmes for classroom teachers to provide them with skills to deliver digital techniques**
- ICT teachers can work on developing course content, structure and delivery which better encourage and support female participation
- **Women are under-represented in ICT jobs**, top management and academic careers and, as shown in this report, men are four times more likely than women to be ICT specialists.
- **At 15 years of age, on average, only 0.5% of girls wish to become ICT professionals, compared to 5% of boys**.
- **Women-owned start-ups receive 23% less funding** and are 30% less likely to have a positive exit compared to male-owned businesses.

Co-ordinated policy action can help narrow the digital gender gap. This requires raising awareness and tackling gender stereotypes; enabling enhanced, safer and more affordable access to digital tools; and stronger cooperation across stakeholders to remove barriers to girls and women's full participation in the digital world.

Digital technologies provide new opportunities to make progress, but technological fixes cannot address the underlying structural problems that drive the digital gender divide. Concrete policy actions are needed to foster women's and girls' full participation and inclusion in the digital economy, while at the same time addressing stereotypes and social norms that lead to discrimination against women.

The digital gender divide needs to be resolved. There is no reason for women to trail behind in the digital transformation. The cost of inaction is high and in the face of sluggish growth, ageing societies and increasing educational attainment of young women, the economic case for digital gender equality is clear.

Bridging the gender divide, also in the digital world, **can provide new sources of global economic growth,** support the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and help achieve the G20 goal of strong, sustainable and inclusive growth. Together, we must and can advance in making digital gender equality a reality.

In addition, girls' **relatively lower educational enrolment in disciplines that would allow them to perform well in a digital world** – such as science, technology, engineering and mathematics, as well as information and communication technologies – coupled with women's and girls' more limited use of digital tools could lead to widening gaps and greater inequality.

Acting now to reverse these trends can pay off: the OECD report finds that greater inclusion of women in the digital economy and increased diversity bring value, both social and economic

Policy Action Agenda on the Digital Gender Divide

Recommendations:

Because the digital transformation is taking over the world, we need to strongly address the challenges and opportunities for women and girls

- Awareness should be raised in schools about implications of quitting jobs for "raising the family": not only career implications but lifelong financial implications including pension. Women are most prone to poverty in old age
- Awareness should be raised that the most flexible jobs with best possibilities to work from home AND earn decent money are jobs in IT or jobs that require at least a good basic knowledge of IT
- Automation of jobs does not only concern basic jobs; parts of jobs of graduates and professionals are being automated as well: medical diagnoses, basic tax and legal advice services, etc. Young people should be made aware of jobs that are least likely to be automated.

There is strong potential **for positive policy action** in core areas. Taken together, these could provide the basis to bridge the digital gender divide and build a more inclusive digital future. A possible agenda could include:

- The **design and implementation of national digital strategies** that actively aim to close the gender digital gap
- **access, adoption and improve the affordability of digital technologies** while enhancing online safety.
- National **digital strategies should include targets** (both numbers and dates) for closing the digital gender divide across at least four dimensions, namely:
- **extend networks and digital access (e.g. through satellite) to rural areas**–
- **promote access to and affordability and use of connected digital devices** (e.g. smart phones, tablets,– laptops), especially for low-income individuals

- **boost availability and promotion of e-banking and mobile money**, especially to women and other– disadvantaged categories
- The need to increase online safety. This includes more effective Cyber Security measures, including security at ATM to ensure that cameras are not used to photo details
- Addressing the abuse against women on social media
- Reaching out to women of different ages in homes for the elderly, at childcare centres, women's shelters, meeting for elderly groups, meetings organised by NGOs for different age groups etc
- formulate strategies to **increase awareness** of the digital gender divide,
- **help address stereotypes, target existing gender biases in education curricula**,
- **encourage greater female enrolment in STEM** studies and more generally, bridge the skills gender divide in the digital era.

Awareness and strong co-operation

Addressing the digital gender divide requires **sufficient awareness and strong co-operation across stakeholders** and tackling gender stereotypes is critical. The digital gender divide is particularly large in STEM education and in high-technology sectors that require STEM degrees.

Further commitments to be made at National Level

- agree to establish **(time bound) targets** for women in STEM
- **create fund and grant schemes aimed at enhancing the enrolment of women in STEM education**
- **establish awards and prizes enhancing the visibility of women in STEM** and in high-technology sectors
- **implement awareness campaigns** tackling socio-cultural norms and biases and stereotypes.
- **Facilitate the labour market participation of women**, at the same time as **monitoring and ensuring job quality and**
- **the provision of support services** aimed at allowing women to work and pursue a career while being mothers or having a family.
- **pair labour market participation-related actions** with **actions fostering a better redistribution of unpaid childcare and housework** and
- **shaping investment for better targeted life-long training**

OECD analysis has found that

- **those countries with the highest shares of women working from home are also the ones that exhibit the highest employment rates** and that
- **greater work flexibility goes hand in hand with higher employment rates among mothers.**
- **fostering women's entrepreneurship and engagement in innovation**, through the **promotion of diversity in entrepreneurship** and within teams of researchers and inventors.

Action across a number of dimensions, include:

- promote a more gender balanced composition of financing institutions especially those receiving– public funds, including design prizes and
- incentive schemes for companies and organisations actively implementing gender neutral policies linked to measurable targets
- foster networking and gender inclusion in entrepreneurial and innovative activities.–
- The need to address accessibility so that all people, irrespective of their knowledge of technology and their age can make use of it in their every day needs especially banking.
- More training programmes focusing on their needs need to be designed in adult learning programmes
- Trained social workers to visit the elderly, accompany them to ATMs, talk to them initially to gain their trust and help feel at ease and lead them step by step to the use of ATMs.
- More security measures at ATMs
- The closing down of branches in certain towns and villages is causing difficulty of accessibility and as a result people are being forced to use ATMs
- There are difficulties in helping the elderly to change to the digital world and sometimes, depending on the mental state and the motivation of the elderly person it is not always successful

Foster evidence-based gender-related actions by collecting gender-disaggregated data.

- a **gender dimensions to data** already collected by National Statistical Offices which at present are not declined by gender (e.g. related to entrepreneurship, innovation, etc.) and
- to **design and implement the collection and publication in periodical reports** (e.g. education and employment related reports) of gender-related statistics, also linked to the targets mentioned above.
- Initiatives such as the OECD Gender Portal could further help collecting the evidence available in support of policy assessment and or monitoring and benchmarking of progresses made.
- **The publication of an annual Digital Gender Equality Report** that is **based on a common methodology** and indicators and the periodical collection.
- **The Measurement Toolkit for the Digital Economy** being prepared for the G20 Digital Economy Task Force by the OECD in conjunction with the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) and other international organisations is a useful and solid starting point.
- **Monitoring progress**, benchmarking initiatives and identifying best practices and high-impact measures is critical for keeping the momentum behind efforts to close the digital gender divide.

Sources: *Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)*

eSkils Malta Foundation

NCW Initiatives

**2.   International Labour Organisation (ILO):
         Ending Violence and Harassment in the World of Work
         Convention No190 Accompanying Recommendation No. 206**

Name of organization submitting the resolution – National Council of Women

Justification and current situation

"**Violence and harassment constitutes one of the greatest threats to decent work**. No more excuses. Let's work together and make the promise of Convention No. 190 a reality for all," says ILO Director-General.

ILO Statement - 25 November 2019
'On this International Day the world is taking a stand against rape and all forms of violence and harassment against women. Violence against women is one of the most pervasive forms of discrimination, one of the most insidious means of undermining women's dignity, autonomy and independence.'

Violence and harassment in the world of work has no regard for occupation or position. No country, sector or occupation is immune.

'**Violence and harassment can, and must, end**. In June 2019, governments and employers' and workers' organizations from across the world adopted the Violence and Harassment Convention (No. 190) and its accompanying Recommendation (No. 206) . For the first time we have an international treaty that sets out the right of everyone to a world of work free from violence and harassment, and shows how that right can be realized'.

This **commitment now needs to be turned into concrete, practical action**. So, on this International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women, the ILO calls for the widest ratification of this ground-breaking Convention. Ratification will accelerate action on the ground, including the adoption and enforcement of national laws, systems for prevention and methods of effective redress.

Violence and harassment in the world of work has **enormous human, social and economic costs**. Violence and harassment constitutes **one of the greatest threats to decent work**. No more excuses. Let's work together and make the promise of Convention No. 190 a reality for all

Recommendations

Core Principles
All Women regardless of their identity or employment status whether working in the formal or informal economy, **have the right to work free from violence and harassment**
Gender Equality and decent work are fundamental pre-conditions for safe, healthy and dignified work-places and are particularly important in challenging social and cultural norms that devalue women's participation in society and at work
Safe cities and communities are essential to foster a safe environment in publics paces, which are often workplace and in transport to and from work.

- In adopting and implementing the inclusive, integrated and gender responsive approach referred to in Article 4, paragraph 2, of the Convention, **Members should address violence and harassment in the world of work in labour and employment, occupational safety and health, equality and non-discrimination law, and in criminal law**, where appropriate.
- **Members should ensure that all workers and employers**, including those in sectors, occupations and work arrangements that are more exposed to violence and harassment, **fully enjoy freedom of association and the effective recognition of the right to collective bargaining** consistent with the Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise Convention, 1948 (No. 87), and the Right to Organise and Collective Bargaining Convention, 1949 (No. 98).
- Members should take appropriate measures to:
- ✓ **promote the effective recognition of the right to collective bargaining** at all levels as a means of preventing and addressing violence and harassment and,
- ✓ to the extent possible, mitigating the impact of domestic violence in the world of work; and
- ✓ **suppor**t such collective bargaining **through the collection and dissemination of information** on related trends and good practices regarding the negotiation process and the content of collective agreements.

  Members should ensure that **provisions on violence and harassment in national laws, regulations and policies take into account the equality and non-discrimination instruments of the International Labour Organization**, including the Equal Remuneration Convention (No. 100) and Recommendation (No. 90), 1951, and the Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention (No. 111) and Recommendation (No. 111), 1958, and other relevant instruments.

Scope of ILO Convention

Article 2
- This Convention **protects workers and other persons in the world of work**, including employees as defined by national law and practice, as well as persons working irrespective of their contractual status, persons in training, including interns and apprentices, workers whose employment has been terminated, volunteers, jobseekers and job applicants, and individuals exercising the authority, duties or responsibilities of an employer.
- This **Convention applies to all sectors, whether private or public, both in the formal and informal economy, and whether in urban or rural areas.**

Article 3
This Convention **applies to violence and harassment in the world of work occurring in the course of, linked with or arising out of work**:
(a) in the workplace, including **public and private spaces** where they are a place of work;
(b) in places **where the worker is paid, takes a rest break or a meal, or uses sanitary, washing and changing facilities;**
(c) **during work-related trips, travel, training, events or social activities;**
(d) **through work-related communications, including those enabled by information and communication technologies;**
(e) **in employer-provided accommodation;** and
(f) when commuting to and from work.

Definitions
For the purpose of this Convention:

(a) **the term "violence and harassment" in the world of work** refers to a range of unacceptable behaviours and practices, or threats thereof, whether a single occurrence or repeated, that aim at, result in, or are likely to result in physical, psychological, sexual or economic harm, and includes gender-based violence and harassment
(b**) the term "gender-based violence and harassment"** means violence and harassment directed at persons because of their sex or gender, or affecting persons of a particular sex or gender disproportionately, and includes sexual harassment.
(c) Without prejudice to subparagraphs (a) and (b) of paragraph 1 of this Article, definitions in national laws and regulations may provide for a single concept or separate concepts.

Protection and Prevention
- Occupational safety and health provisions on violence and harassment in national laws, regulations and policies should take into account relevant
- occupational safety and health instruments of the International Labour Organization, such as the Occupational Safety and Health Convention, 1981 (No. 155), and
- the Promotional Framework for Occupational Safety and Health Convention, 2006 (No. 187).
- Members should, as appropriate, specify in laws and regulations **that workers and their representatives should take part in the design, implementation and monitoring of the workplace policy** referred to in Article 9(a) of the Convention, and such policy should:

- Companies should state that **violence and harassment will not be tolerated; a clause should be included in the company's policy documents that proper conduct on issues of harassment are clearly stated or defined**

- **Companies should be required to publish in its financial statements wages split between men and women to ensure that measures are taken to reduce the gender gap and the abuse of power**

- **Companies should keep a logbook with attendance of people in meetings where policy is discussed and ensure that both men and women are engaged fairly in these discussions**

- **How can psychological abuse be tackled This is difficult to justify in court**

(b) establish violence and harassment **prevention programmes** with, if appropriate, measurable objectives;

(c) **specify the rights and responsibilities of the workers and the employer**

(d) contain **information on complaint and investigation procedures;**

(e) provide that all internal and external communications related to **incidents of violence and harassment will be duly considered, and acted upon as appropriate;**

(f) specify **the right to privacy of individuals and confidentiality**, as referred to in Article 10(c) of the Convention, while balancing the right of workers to be made aware of all hazards; and

(g) include **measures to protect complainants, victims, witnesses and whistle-blowers against victimization or retaliation.**

(h) provide free legal advice

Risk Assessment
The workplace risk assessment referred to in Article 9(c) of the Convention **should take into account factors that increase the likelihood of violence and harassment, including psychosocial hazards and risks.** Particular attention should be paid to the hazards and risks that:

(a) **arise from working conditions and arrangements**, work organization and human resource management, as appropriate;

(b) **involve third parties such as clients, customers, service providers, users, patients and members of the public**; and

(c) **arise from discrimination, abuse of power relations, and gender, cultural and social norms** that support violence and harassment.

Members should take **legislative or other measures** to **protect migrant workers**, particularly women migrant workers, regardless of migrant status, in origin, transit and destination countries as appropriate, from violence and harassment in the world of work.

Members should adopt **appropriate measures for sectors** or occupations and work arrangements in which **exposure to violence and harassment may be more likely**, such as night work, work in isolation, health, hospitality, social services, emergency services, domestic work, transport, education or entertainment

In facilitating the **transition from the informal to the formal economy**, Members should provide resources and assistance for informal economy workers and employers, and their associations, to prevent and address violence and harassment in the informal economy.

Members should ensure that **measures** to prevent violence and harassment **do not result in the restriction** of the participation in specific jobs, sectors or occupations, or their exclusion therefrom, of women and the groups referred to in Article 6 of the Convention.

The reference **to vulnerable groups** and groups in situations of vulnerability in Article 6 of the Convention should be interpreted in accordance with applicable international labour standards and international instruments on human rights

Guidance Training and Awareness Raising
Members should **fund, develop, implement and disseminate**, as appropriate:

(a) **programmes aimed at addressing factors that increase the likelihood of violence and harassment in the world of work**, including discrimination, the abuse of power relations, and gender, cultural and social norms that support violence and harassment;

(b) **gender-responsive guidelines and training programmes** to assist judges, labour inspectors, police officers, prosecutors and other public officials in fulfilling their mandate regarding violence and harassment in the world of work, as well as to assist public and private employers and workers and their organizations in preventing and addressing violence and harassment in the world of work;

(c) **model codes of practice and risk assessment tools** on violence and harassment in the world of work, either general or sector-specific, taking into account the specific situations of workers and other persons belonging to the groups referred to in Article 6 of the Convention;

(d) **public awareness-raising campaigns in the various languages of the country**, including **those of the migrant workers residing in the country**, that convey the unacceptability of violence and harassment, in particular gender-based violence and harassment, address discriminatory attitudes and prevent stigmatization of victims, complainants, witnesses and whistle-blowers;

(e) **gender-responsive curricula and instructional materials** on violence and harassment, including gender-based violence and harassment, **at all levels of education and vocational training,** in line with national law and circumstances;

(f) **materials for journalists and other media personnel on gender-based violence and harass**ment, including its underlying causes and risk factors, with due respect for their independence and freedom of expression; and

(g) More public awareness of harassment at the workplace: **public campaign**s aimed at fostering safe, healthy and harmonious workplaces free from violence and harassment.

(h) Companies, in particular through the Human Resources Management be trained to identify if there are cases of domestic violence in the home and connected with harassment at the workplace that also should be addressed

Enforcement, Remedies and Assistance
The remedies referred to in Article 10(b) of the Convention could include:
(a) the **right to resign with compensation;**
(b) **reinstatement;**
c) **appropriate compensation for damages;**
(d) orders requiring **measures with immediate executory force** to be taken to ensure that certain conduct is stopped or that policies or practices are changed; and
(e) **legal fees and costs** according to national law and practice.

Victims of violence and harassment in the world of work should have access to compensation in cases of psychosocial, physical or any other injury or illness which results in incapacity to work.

The complaint and dispute resolution mechanisms for gender-based violence and harassment referred to in Article 10(e) of the Convention should include measures such as:
(a) **courts with expertise** in cases of gender-based violence and harassment;
(b) **timely and efficient processing;**
(c) **legal advice and assistance for complainants and victims**;
(e) **guides and other information resources** available and accessible in the languages that are widely spoken in the country; and
 (f) **shifting of the burden of proof, as appropriate**, in proceedings other than criminal proceedings.

Support, services and remedies for victims of gender-based violence and harassment referred to in Article 10(e) of the Convention should include measures such as:

(a) **support to help victims** re-enter the labour market;
(b) **counselling and information services**, in an accessible manner as appropriate;
(c) 24-hour hotlines;
(d**) emergency services;**
(e) **medical care and treatment and psychological support;**
(f) **crisis centres, including shelters**; and
(g) **specialized police units or specially trained officers** to support victims.

Appropriate measures to mitigate the impacts of domestic violence in the world of work referred to in Article 10(f) of the Convention could include:
(a) leave for victims of domestic violence;
(b) flexible work arrangements and protection for victims of domestic violence;
(c) temporary protection against dismissal for victims of domestic violence, as appropriate, except on grounds unrelated to domestic violence and its consequences;
(d) the inclusion of domestic violence in workplace risk assessments;
(e) a referral system to public mitigation measures for domestic violence, where they exist; and
(f) awareness-raising about the effects of domestic violence.

Perpetrators of violence and harassment in the world of work. Companies should be held **accountable and providecounselling** or other measures, where appropriate, with a view to preventing the reoccurrence of violence and harassment, and facilitating their reintegration into work, where appropriate.
Labour inspectors and officials of other competent authorities, as appropriate, **should undergo gender-responsive training** with a view to identifying and addressing violence and harassment in the world of work, including psychosocial hazards and risks, gender-based violence and harassment, and discrimination against particular groups of workers.

The mandate of national bodies responsible for labour inspection, occupational safety and health, and equality and non-discrimination, including gender equality, should cover violence and harassment in the world of work.

Members States should make **efforts to collect and publish statistics on violence and harassment** in the world of work disaggregated by sex, form of violence and harassment, and sector of economic activity, including with respect to the groups referred to in Article 6 of the Convention.

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3.   Inequalities in the access for young people to information and support services

Name of organization submitting the resolution – National Council of Women

Justification and current situation to be addressed
Young men and women are the future of European societies. However, there are concerns at EU and national levels that the combined stresses from school, expectations from parents, and peer and societal pressures can create challenging transitions to adulthood and have a long-lasting impact.
The need for a revision of the curriculum to reduce the pressure on young people of all ages and to ensure that this includes a curriculum program that focuses on participation of young people in the classroom and a methodology that develops thinking skills
There are also concerns about inequalities of opportunities and resources, including those for coping with social or health problems. **To reduce inequalities, ensuring access to key services is vital.**
It is therefore necessary to review inequalities in young people's access to information and support services and how these inequalities can be overcome focusing on the 12–24 age group; and where possible, information should be is provided separately for ages 12–17 and 18–24

Initiatives by the European Commission
In May 2018 the European Commission proposed a new framework for cooperation on youth for the period 2019–2027, **which emphasises partnership and cross sectoral work**. The Youth Strategy points to cooperation between schools, youth workers, health professionals and sports organisations to ensure better access to opportunities.

The importance of public services is highlighted in the European Pillar of Social Rights, which includes a focus on using services to support education, training and lifelong learning, equal opportunities, gender equality and active support to employment.

OECD Report on Mental Health
Another issue, not mentioned so explicitly in European Commission policy documents but which has received a lot of attention from a number of international organisations, is **mental health and in particular the mental health of vulnerable groups, including young people.**

Recent warning comes in the OECD report Health at a glance 2018, which notes that **the growing issues of mental health pose a heavy burden not only for the individuals concerned but also for society, including increased spending on social and health services.**
The report calls for **more investment in timely and preventive social and health services**, both universal in nature but **also targeting children and young people so that they are not scarred by mental health issues throughout their adult lives** (OECD, 2018).

Key findings issues around mental well-being affect many young people in Europe.
- **Socioeconomic status** has a strong impact on whether young people are at risk of depression. Those living in households in the lowest income are more likely to be at risk.
- There is also **a strong gender dimension to issues of mental health, with young women (15–24 years) being more prone to depression**
- **The use of social media and the too frequent use of mobile phone** in particular, is very often isolating young people from the rest of society, including their peers, which in itself is another source of lack of mental well-being
- **Issues around mental well-being affect many young people in Europe.** Data for 2016 show that 14% of Europeans aged 18–24 were at risk of depression. Young people in Sweden were most at risk of depression, followed by those in Estonia, Malta and the Netherlands
- Data for 2014 show that 4% of Europeans aged 15–24 were chronically depressed. The highest rates were in Ireland (12%), followed by Finland (11%), Sweden (10%) and Germany (9%).

Increase in Bullying and Cyberbullying
- The incidence of both bullying and cyberbullying are on the rise in several countries, with the highest prevalence in the Baltic states and the French-speaking community in Belgium.
- Given that issues around health and mental well-being are among the most prominent problems affecting young people, access to relevant services is key to addressing associated risks.
- Yet a **significant proportion of young people have difficulties in accessing services.**

Access to health care,
- **The most important access issues are delays in getting an appointment and long waiting times on the day.**
- **There is also the question of the adequacy of the services**.
- There is evidence that in addition to dealing with **perceived stigma and confidentiality issues**, young people also **struggle with the affordability of services.**
- Eurofound data shows that 20% of young people cited **cost as prohibitive** in the EU (72% Cyprus, 61% in Malta and 56% Greece)
- Overall, in the EU**, young people with disability or chronic illness** are more likely to report difficulties in accessing healthcare – especially in terms of delays, waiting time and finding time to get to the doctor.

Recommendations and Success factors underpinning efforts to reduce inequalities in access include:

- Family life: More attention needs to be given within the family atmosphere to ensure that young people are listened to with care and to have adequate space to voice their concerns
- **adaptability** – services and professionals need to adopt new tools in line with trends among young people
- **guidance** – some young people may not be in a position to immediately know what type of service they need ›
- the need for **high degree of knowledge of and familiarity with the issues of concern to young people** ›
- **empathy** with young people and an understanding of their needs, which translates into greater involvement of young people themselves as service providers through, for example, peer-to-peer support. Schools are the place where youths spend most of the time. Mental health should be addressed in schools in the form of support groups and group discussions
- special attention to be given to young adults with intellectual disabilities as well as young refugees(possibly still suffering from post traumatic stress disorder)
- Identifying individuals who are going through some form of stress and directing them towards help, as very often young people are shy of seeking help
- At Primary, Secondary and tertiary level a toolkit (in the form of a booklet suitable to the different age groups) should be provided
- The need for more PSD teachers, School Counsellors and psychologists, specialising in youth issues; the latter need to be more often on the school premises

Policy pointers for service providers

Service providers should: ›

- **respect and protect the privacy of young people** needing help (as well as the privacy of parents) › consider the differences among young people and tailor services to individual situations
- take into account **emerging issues such as cyberbullying** and **rising levels of homelessness**
- consider going beyond a simple concept of 'hard to reach' and **invest in understanding the causes of inequalities** in access to services in order to provide solutions ›
- **be flexible, without putting unnecessary pressure on young people** to use certain services for further referrals
- **Sports organisations can plan programmes with the help of psychologists to deal with lack of mental wellbeing amongst young people**
- **Doctors need to take stress and anxiety claims seriously and not dismiss claims or indicative signs**
- **Mental health issues need to be more effectively recognised at school and workplaces, irrespective of age especially when issuing medical certificates – issues such as burn-out, depression, anxiety at the workplace or at school should be adequately dealt with immediately**
- **Training teachers in schools and managers in companies to address issues of mentalhealth.Eg: Richmond Foundation deliver Mental Health First Aid for managers; this could be extended to teachers, community workers and NGOs**
- **Put in place in schools meetings of students with School Counsellors on a regular basis similar to PSD sessions where they can share their experiences. If necessary schools can engage outsource trained Counsellors**

- **NGOs need to ensure service providers are trained specifically to deal with children/students with special needs and if not refer to a specialised professional**

Policy pointers for policymakers
Policymakers should take a broader, more holistic view that focuses **on issues beyond employment and draw on a life-course perspective.**
- Policymakers should: **ensure the availability of a network of services to cater for the social and health needs of young people**, with the help of **public and non-governmental providers** that have the competencies and experience to deliver such services
- **examine young people's environments at home and in school** so new and emerging risks, such as rising levels of cyberbullying, can be detected early
- promote **closer cooperation between mainstream services and schools to provide more school-based interventions**: for example, around mental health issues (understanding of mental health disorders, mental health literacy) ›
- **put in place and support initiatives grounded in national programmes** to improve the coverage and quality of social and health services for young people
- when establishing eligibility criteria for services and allowances, **attention to the age range 12–17 (who are covered by child protection policies) should be given without forgetting those aged 18–24 (or even up to age 29). The differences in the age groups need to be critically addressed separately**
- **Provide online initiatives that help the younger age-group (12 -17) in the form of a FB of a support line containing posts of awareness raising and encouragement. A similar one for the 18 -24 age groups can be provided offering a support system of motivation and encouragement messages adapted to their age**

Policy pointers for the EU
The EU should:
- **through its Youth Strategy, explicitly mainstream youth into the European Pillar of Social Rights** and related initiatives not only in relation to employment and education, but equally in terms of social protection and access to essential services
- support **the provision of more comparative data** on access to social and health services in the Member States
- **promote and support research on the causes and consequences of inequalities between young people** in their experience of health and social problems and access to services as well as on the impact of various initiatives to increase access ›
- **provide budget to organisations that facilitate access to information and support for young people** beyond the mainstream environment, **especially social enterprises or non-governmental organisations engaged with or providing service**

Source: European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions (Eurofound)
Publication: Inequalities in the access of young people to information and support services

Publication: (//www.eurofound.europa.eu/publications/report/2019/inequalities-in-the-access-of-young-peoplee-to-information-and-support-services)

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4.   Equality Education in the Classroom

Name of organization submitting the resolution – National Council of Women

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

- 'Education is power.
- ✓ Power to develop knowledge and skills essential for the personal and professional environment.
- ✓ Power to gain economic independence and to achieve social change.
- ✓ Power to establish an equal, productive and inclusive society that both women and men can benefit from.'
- Education is also a fundamental human right. (***Vera Jourova, European Commissioner for Justice, Consumers and Gender Equality, Foreword, Equinet 2018***)
- Empowering girls and boys through education helps them to pave a professional path of their choice and gain economic independence through work
- However the overall higher success rates of girls and women in terms of educational outcomes and higher education, recent statistical figures show that women remain at greater risk of social exclusion, unemployment and low-quality jobs in the EU
- For this reason, it has been one of the Commission's most relevant objectives, as part of the Gender Equality Strategy to promote well-balanced education for both girls and boys and to empower girls to participate more vigorously in the labour market and in politics as well as to obtain professional positions that better reflect their education results
- "School books and teaching material do not only have the power to determine a young girl's occupational path in the future. Gendered images and narratives diminishing the role of girls and women can fuel gender stereotypes at an early age, which can lead to

gender-based violence, harassment and sexist language even in educational settings"
(***Věra Jourová, European Commissioner for Justice 2018***)

Legal Framework

The definitions and provisions of all relevant international treaties are unanimous on the right to education free of discrimination, including discrimination based on sex. At the European level, several documents (***including the Istanbul Convention and the EU equal treatment Directives***) focus on discrimination-free education. In some EU Member States, national legislation on education also includes gender equality provisions.

Mandate of Equality Bodies

Many equality bodies do not have a mandate to handle cases of discrimination in the school setting, within their equality legislation, though the principle of equality may be enshrined in other pieces of legislation at national level.

- As a consequence issues such as discriminatory content of school books may need to be tackled using alternative approaches. However in such cases equality bodies can engage making use of their promotional function instead
- Some equality bodies have carried out investigations and issued studies and recommendations on discriminatory school materials.
- Complaints received on gender and education, pertain to different situations, such as girls in school being offered stereotypical and discriminatory advice on careers.
-

 Harassment, sexual harassment and gender-based bullying,

- There is a need for clearer and more gender sensitive definitions in work on bullying in schools. It is the most common form of school violence on both girls and boys
- With the development of new technologies, cyber bullying has become the most common form of aggressive act carried out, using electronic forms of contact, primarily social networks
- Equality bodies can play an important role in tackling bullying and sexual harassment in their respective countries.

Equality bodies and NGOs

Working with women's organizations/Gender Equality Organisations (NGOs) to raise awareness of gender-based violence in schools. Various women's organisations have a wide range of experience and research on education and non-discrimination which can be a source of establishing cooperation with schools in Malta in different ways, in particular through projects and training courses.

This includes:

- cooperating with schools to train teachers and help develop effective reporting mechanisms;
- raising awareness, including data collection; and
- providing schools with guidelines and policies addressing sexual harassment.
- measures for preventing sexual harassment in schools
- Harassment where teachers and students are concerned need specific training and a professional approach

Promoting Gender Equality

The wealth of good practices shared by equality bodies and NGOs in promoting equality cover a range of activities. This includes:

- supporting schools in making equality plans and gender mainstreaming;
- gender mainstreaming in teachers' and pupils' curricula that respond to the needs of the exiting education system in order to be effectively embedded and integrated with the existing education structure
- active monitoring of the content of the school curricular and the provision of recommendations to cease discriminatory practices
- gender equality as reflected in text books for schools, specifically, ensuring that they are gender sensitive
- working with and training teachers by providing training, guidance materials as well as specific training to handle complaints for minors

Challenges and Recommendations

Recommendations for equality bodies to address gender-based discrimination in schools and promote equality include:

- active monitoring of the content of school curricula;
- providing training, guidance materials and
- conducting awareness raising campaigns;
- taking an intersectional approach to gender equality with all promotion aiming to instill appreciation and respect for diversity.
- Teachers sometimes fail to consider gender equality relevant given, that girls often perform well in school;
- cooperation with established Women's Organisations
- close cooperation with Children's Ombuds.

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5.   The Benefits of Gender Equality for the Economy

Name of organization submitting the resolution – National Council of Women

Justification/s and current situation to be addressed

The European Parliament resolution of 13.2.2019 on 'experiencing a backlash in women's rights and gender equality in the EU' addresses 'the regression of women's rights in the EU' stating that it is 'particularly worrying' as 'the level of gender equality is often indicative and serves as a first warning of the deteriorating situation of fundamental rights and values in a given society'

Equality between women and men is a fundamental value and objective of the European Union, enshrined in its treaties and commitments, and it holds untapped benefits for the European economy**.** Gender equality can contribute to economic growth and sustainable development, and thus to the wellbeing of all European citizens. Further steps to address persistent gender gaps need to be taken.

Political and societal commitment on gender equality must be renewed. However, this would not be enough. To move forward and ensure effective implementation of EU gender equality policies, all sections of societies have to engage in the process and commitments have to be followed by action

The Section for Economic and Monetary Union and Economic and Social Cohesion (ECO) of the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) organised a public debate on **"The Benefits of Gender Equality for the European Economy" (29.11.2019)** with the aim to explore how policies aimed at achieving greater gender equality could help reinforce Europe's economic performance and what role the European civil society could play in supporting the development and implementation of these policies.

Proposals and Recommendations

Analyses have shown that '**gender equality would go hand in hand with higher levels of competitiveness, productivity and economic growth'**, EIGE director **Virginija Langbakk** affirmed. At present, progress on gender equality is, nevertheless, uneven amongst Member States and its pace is generally slow as shown by the Annual Gender Equality Index of the ***European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE).***

It is the perfect time for a renewed commitment and strategy in view of the new incoming Commission

The way forward

- **Gender Equality is not just an issue of justice.**
- Quality employment and horizontal and vertical issues need to be addressed to ensure competitivity
- **Closing gaps in STEM education** will bring about rapid progress and a much better pay
- Addressing practices in gender educational choices is currently creating an occupational divide
- **The gender gap needs to be addressed over a life-time to include the maternity gap, women at work with kids under the age of seven,** time to raise the educational level of mothers and others.
- This would require: targeted action, competition and well-being of families
- Additional proposals include addressing the concept of the **dual-carer workplace, boosting SMEs**, **female entrepreneurship** and **educating women for a digitalized workplace**

R**easons for the rather slow progress** on gender equality and **potential solutions**.

- The main reasons are within the fields **of culture, care, education and pay transparency**
- **Stereotypes are deeply rooted in societies**. They have an influence on choices not only on education and training, but also recruitment and promotion. Low female employment rates in the STEM sector (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) and underrepresentation of women in the private sector and top management are among the consequences.
- There is **the need of a shift in mindset across society**
- **Reaching out to young women at the places they frequent whether schools, colleges, University, places they frequent in their free time, at home if they are on maternity leave or reduced hours etc. This will help address the maternity gap and encourage education for the digital world**
- **Offer distance learning courses for women while caring for children or other members of the family so they will not be left behind when they return to the workplace. Department for Adult Learning can be approached**

The Industrial Sector

Marion Hannerup, deputy director general of the *Confederation of Danish Industry*, noted that some private businesses, for instance in the ICT section, also need to change their **corporate culture** to attract female employees.

Increased employment of women in private businesses is important for business performance.

She presented **good practices** to that end, including training to address 'unconscious bias', leadership and mentoring programmes for talented women, highlighting female role models, encouraging women's talents and introducing specific recruitment rules, such as the need to have a pre-determined share of women among the shortlisted candidates for a job opening.

The C**are Gap** was identified as another reason for persisting inequalities. Care responsibilities are still borne mainly by women, with negative effects on their economic potential and independence. It is hoped that the EU Work-life Balance Directive that includes a period of designated paid parental leave for both parents would lead to a more even division of parental leave. Social security systems should provide for adequately paid parental leave.

Gender Equality in the Family

Elizabeth Gosme, director of *Coface Families Europe*, said that gender equality in the labour market and the economy goes hand in hand with gender equality in the family. COFACE advocate for work-life support for both men and women based on a mix of access to resources, services and time to care, so that people do not have to choose between work and family. The **reconciliation of work and family life** would increase women's employment as well as general wellbeing and fertility and reduce family and child poverty. Investments in family businesses, SMEs and early child education and care are important aspects of fostering gender equality in the labour market. In the course of the debate, participants also addressed the **gender pay gap**. The commitment by Commission President Ursula von der Leyen for binding pay transparency measures was welcomed.

The Labour Market

In this context, **Zoe Lanara-Tzotze** from the *Greek General Confederation of Labour (GSEE)*, called for a directive that included, amongst other things, a right to access information on pay levels for all workers, annual reporting obligations for companies with more than 10 staff based on the entire pay structure and a ban on secrecy clauses in contracts. Lifting the veil of secrecy would empower women, make them conscious of their rights and lead to pay equality.

In addition to pay transparency, **Lanara-Tzotze** touched on austerity policies and their impact on gender equality. She said: Such policies have been undermining or restricting collective bargaining. If we want gender equality in the labour market, **collective bargaining is essentia**l. Several participants supported her view.

General Remarks.

Opinions diverged on how to address persisting gender gaps. Soft and hard measures, nudging and legislation (e.g. gender quota), were proposed. Nevertheless, speakers and participants agreed that **gender equality needs to be reflected in all policy areas and future measures** and that the progress on gender equality requires **joint efforts** by politicians, companies, unions, individuals and families. Actions have to follow on commitments, also with a view to the increasing risk of new gender gaps.

The EESC has many times called on the policy-makers of Europe for effective measures to ensure equal opportunities for women and men in the labour market, notably measures to close the gender pay gap, as well as to tackle the concentration of women and men in different sectors and occupations and in different grades, levels of responsibility or positions. The Committee will continue to advocate on the issue of gender equality and aims to lead by example through mainstreaming gender equality in its own policies and practices

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6.   Digital transformation: Challenge and opportunity for migrant workers

NCW to follow: Research Study: Digital transformation: challenge and opportunity for migrant workers

EUROPEAN COMMISSION JOINT RESEARCH CENTRE

Justification

- The digital transformation, from robotics to artificial intelligence, is transforming our jobs**.**
- It is opening up new working opportunities as our societies become more technologically advanced. At the same time, computers could soon be replacing humans and performing their tasks across a number of sectors.
- As we start to see the effects of this transformation in the EU, migrant workers are in a more precarious position compared to others.
- Around half who have come from outside the EU to make a living are performing tasks that automation could render obsolete, according to **a new study** carried out by the JRC and the University of Salamanca.
- The results of the study show that migrants are particularly exposed to the effects of the digital transformation and are therefore more in need of specific interventions – from education and training to social protection.
- These kinds of interventions can help them to take advantage of the new career opportunities the transformation could offer.
- The Skills Agenda for Europe launched 10 actions to make the right training, skills and support available to people in the EU. It also includes specific actions to support early identification and profiling of skills and qualifications of third country nationals.

Challenges and Opportunities

- However, automation poses challenges and opportunities - provided the right policies are in place to ensure we are prepared for the digital transformation - for all workers in the EU, not just migrants.

- In this context, the <u>European Pillar of Social Rights</u> focuses on inclusive education and training policies, the importance of which has been confirmed through the EU's **Skills Agenda for Europe** and the **European Education Area.**
- In addition, the **Upskilling Pathways** initiative, as part of the Agenda, helps low-skilled adults, including migrants, to strengthen their basic skills and align them with labour market needs.
- The Commission also acknowledged the need to support third country nationals in the context of the proposals for the EU's long-term budget 2021-2027.
- In line with the approach to invest in people, the new European Social Fund Plus (ESF+) will specifically support the socio-economic integration of non-EU nationals in the long term, with measures to reduce poverty, promote social inclusion and health, and combat discrimination and inequalities.

Education versus Automation

- Scientists considered 9 job categories and the extent to which they contain routine tasks that might readily be automated with advancements in technology.
- From office cleaners to food prep assistants, 49.54% of workers who have come from outside the EU are doing jobs categorised as 'elementary' or 'sales and service'.
- Elementary occupations are those at the highest risk of automation as jobs requiring the solution of complex problems or negotiating with people are harder to automate. This would be the case for managerial or professional occupations, where only 15.99% of non-EU workers are employed.
- A person's job depends significantly on their educational attainment and, hence, the analysis takes that into account.
- That being said, migrant workers are much more likely to be doing jobs with a high automation potential than people living and working in their home country
- Their odds of having such a job are between 2.3 and 3 times higher. This is true even for highly educated migrant workers:

  - 34.3% of EU citizens living and working in their home country have a university degree. This group has the lowest chance of working in a job with a high automation potential;
  - Graduates make up 34.9% of EU citizens who have moved to work in another European country, and 27.6% of third country nationals. However for both groups, the odds of being employed in a job with a high automation potential are 3 times that of EU citizens with university degrees who are living and working in their home country.

- **The European Social Fund** provides valuable support to migrants, helping to improve their skills and career prospects. The Fund reached 1.7 million migrants and persons with a foreign or minority background between 2014 and 2017.

- In addition, **Under the European Semester, the EU's key instrument to steer social reforms in the Member States**, several countries received recommendations to improve access to quality education and training and to social protection.

Background

- The study forms part of the European Commission **Knowledge Centre on Migration and Demography's** work which provides EU policymakers with the knowledge and analysis needed to strengthen the response to the challenges of migration and to fully seize its opportunities.
- The European Commission's **2018 Employment and Social Developments in Europe (ESDE) review** gives a comprehensive analysis of the digital transformation, how it changes the relation between labour and machines, and how it the changes the nature of work.
- The study '**Migrant workers and the digital transformation in the EU**' provides insights on the possible implications of these changes on the labour market integration of migrants.
- It is based on the most recent data from the **EU Labour Force Survey** and the **Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development's Survey of Adult Skills** (PIAAC).
- The sample data only covers the resident population so does not include information on the working activities of undocumented migrants.

To address:

- **Foreign/migrant children in primary schools who are at least 2 years lower than the Maltese children of their age, due to lack of competences especially in English – (need to check this carefully)**
- **Verifying authenticity of certificates of migrants both of school age children, young people and adults and problems they encounter to rectify their position**
- Governments should develop international standards to test knowledge of graduates from other countries, so licensing for migrants becomes easier
- Providing solutions for language barriers
- Teaching of English to non-English speaking children
- Conversation Courses for migrants- young people and adults
- Recognition of qualifications