



Founded 1964

N-Mara



NCW President and members of the Executive Committee paid a courtesy call on the Prime Minister, the Hon Dr Lawrence Gonzi



The National Council of Women bestows Honorary Presidency to Dame Blanche Martin in the presence of the Prime Minister's wife Mrs. Catherine Gonzi



Doris Bingley with Lisa Williams-Lahari, Pacific Islands AIDS Foundation (wearing a wreath as part of her national costume), Ambassador Robert Aisi - Permanent Mission of Papua New Guinea to the UN and other representatives of the Pacific Islands, at the end of the Ending the Aids Stigma Seminar organised by The Permanent Mission for Papua New Guinea to the UN, The Commonwealth Foundation, The Commonwealth Civil Society Network on HIV and AIDS and The Commonwealth Women's Network

NATIONAL COUNCIL OF WOMEN MALTA



Women in Politics



Your vote for more women in the European Parliament - June Elections 2009



The Hon. Chris Said addressing the delegates during the Civil Society MEUSAC Meeting



NCW President and members of the Executive Committee paid a courtesy call on the President of Malta, H.E. Dr Edward Fenech Adami

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NCW members during the Annual General Meeting at the Victoria Hotel Sliema on 31st January 2009

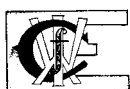
Members of



International Council of Women

Founded 1888

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



European Centre of the International Council of Women

Founded 1961

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

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Members and affiliated organisations are requested to keep their subscription fees up to date.



Founded 1964

IL-Mara

NEWSLETTER OF THE NATIONAL COUNCIL OF WOMEN - MALTA

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EDITORIAL

The MEP elections are upon us. It often seems like we are being blasted from all directions with information about the various candidates.

Through its campaign to raise more awareness of women candidates, NCW is shining a stronger spotlight on the female candidates. Female candidates face a lot of difficulty at election time. Unfortunately they have to cope with prejudice from more than one source. Often, voters automatically favour the male candidates rather than the female ones. Although female candidates find it harder to strike the work-life balance, we admire their determination, commitment and expertise in the different areas they wish to work on if elected.

Once elected, it is no easy ride. Females elected into office (whatever it may be) have to face scrutiny regarding their dress, their family life etc... I recently came across a list of the most beautiful, female politicians. I think it is important to take pride in one's appearance; however I am certain that female politicians would rather be commemorated for their work rather than a particular outfit!

Therefore, come the elections, I urge you to place your vote wisely. Obviously one does not vote for a candidate just because she is female, in the same way one does not vote for a candidate because he happens to have brown hair; but I do believe that all the female candidates deserve a longer glance than usual!

Meanwhile, we should also spare a thought for countries like Brunei and Saudi Arabia where women unfortunately have no right to vote or to stand for election.

Maria Giuliana Fenech



NCW AGM highlights family and work balance and women in EP elections next June

The Annual General Meeting of the National Council of Women was held on Saturday 31 January, at the Victoria Hotel, Sliema. Outgoing President, Doreen Micallef, thanked members for their commitment to the Council's initiatives throughout the year to ensure the representation of women at national level and European level in a wide range of areas.

Incoming President Grace Attard called on Government and social partners for a National Action Plan to put in practice effective measures to balance family and work for both mothers and fathers and for family carers in the public and private sectors. She also urged members present to make use of their vote in the forthcoming elections for the European Parliament in June to vote for women – give women a chance!

Grace Attard highlighted the need for immediate and medium-term measures (a recovery plan) to be agreed upon within the MCESD, a stimulus to address the global financial crisis, in particular to safeguard jobs and to provide for the most vulnerable in our society. In conclusion, Grace Attard urged young women to make informed choices about their careers to ensure a stronger participation of women in Science, R&D and ICT, areas which offer opportunities of new jobs in our efforts to reduce the negative effects of the global economic crisis.

Guest speaker Richard Curmi, formerly of ETC, talked

to members present on *Sharing responsibilities for more active co-operation between women and men.*

The General Assembly also discussed and approved a number of resolutions, dealing with: The Participation of Maltese Women in the European



NCW President and the Hon. General Secretary during the Annual General meeting

Parliament; The Portrayal of Women in Advertising; SMEs – A Favourable Business Environment – Supporting Enterprise and Job Creation; The Contribution of ICT to Sustainable Development; The Renewed Lisbon Strategy; Temporary Workers; Protecting Children Using the Internet; Transition from Primary to Secondary Education; Children as Indirect Victims of Domestic Violence; Improving Teachers' Education; and Irregular Immigrants

The Executive Committee Members for 2009 are President Grace Attard, Vice Presidents: Doreen Micallef, Helga Ellul and Mary Rose Zahra, Hon. General Secretary Doris Bingley, Hon.Treasurer Therese Cassola, Members: Jean Killick, Dr Mariosa Vella Cardona, Dr Mercedes Schembri Wismayer, Nadya Anne Mangion, Maria Camilleri, Diane Xuereb, Josephine A. Sammut, Maud Muscat, Ruth Falzon and Dr Claudine Zarb, NCW Legal Advisor

Grace Attard
NCW President

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



Dear Colleagues and Friends,

It is indeed an unusual feeling making a come-back as president of NCW for a second time. I must say that I am very happy to work with such an enthusiastic Executive Committee.

The scenario today is different from what it was four years ago – it is much more challenging! However, NCW has always moved with the times. Its strong links with the EU Institutions, whether the EU Parliament, the Commission or the EESC, have given our Council the opportunities

to make the necessary adaptation to today's needs – thinking on an-EU level yet with our feet firmly set in addressing issues at national level, as can be seen in the wide range of information and activities that our newsletter is providing.

We are in touch with grassroots, with those women who, more than others, require space for their voice to be heard, to give them visibility. It is really up to us to address their concerns, to provide channels with the various authorities and point them to opportunities to help them realize their potential

We proudly look back on the milestones and successes of members who laid the foundations of NCW, who have done so much and who have paved the way for present-day initiatives. Today NCW works towards ensuring the perspective of women in all areas, be it health, environment, the media, entrepreneurship – and also women's role in the global economic and financial crisis!

This year NCW is celebrating its 45th Anniversary in a number of ways, not least by hosting the ECICW Spring Meeting in Malta. Coupled with this meeting is our second major initiative: the ongoing Campaign to raise the profile of Maltese women who are candidates for election as Members of the European Parliament. This campaign will culminate in a Conference during which all women MEP candidates are invited to share with our members and friends their vision as future MEPs. We hope to see you all there (see details on page 8 - 9)

I assure you all that there is a place for each and every one of you in the National Council of Women, including your friends, companions and relatives. We all share a common goal, we all have something to contribute, we all learn from each other to forge ahead with our plans for the benefit of society.

As always, I look forward to working with you. 🌸

Grace Attard

NCW Foundation Day - Celebrating 45 years of Achievements NCW Campaign - Your vote for more women in the European Parliament - June Elections 2009.

Foundation Day Dinner at the Victoria Hotel on Tuesday 15 February was another memorable occasion attended by guest of honour, Ms Catherine Gonzi, wife of the Prime Minister. Foundation Day dinner is a yearly event during which the Council pays tribute to founder members and past members for their valuable contribution to society in particular to the advancement of women. For many years the Council has been proactive in its initiatives to ensure that balancing family and work responsibilities will remain the key objective in the framework of equality of opportunity.

Incoming President Grace Attard proudly stated that throughout the 45 years since the Council was established, it had succeeded in being pro-active and relevant to the needs of society, in particular to women's rights. She also spoke about the Council's ongoing Campaign **'Your vote for more women in the European Parliament - June Elections 2009.'**

The President said that as a result of the fast changes national and global, NCW is working on promoting women's contribution to a wide range of areas including energy policy, reform of the education system, consumer rights, development of ICT, labour laws, lifelong learning, partnerships between educational establishments and business, SMEs, flexicurity, science and technology and many others at national and European level.

Ms Catherine Gonzi thanked NCW for their valid contribution to society, stating that the Council was a living example of the generosity and enthusiasm of the voluntary sector in their efforts to improve

the quality of life of the Maltese both in the social and economic aspects. She expressed satisfaction at the increasing number of young members through whose contribution the work of the Council can become more relevant to the needs of society to-day

During the dinner, Dame Blanche Martin was awarded Honorary Life Membership for "her valuable contribution to the Council as President

Dame Blanche Martin thanked the incoming President and Executive Committee for bestowing this honour. Full of emotion traced the milestones of NCW and other initiatives she carried out as co-founder and member. As a memento of this occasion, Dame Blanche Martin presented a hardbound copy of the newsletter of Din l-Art Helwa containing an outstanding record of the organisation's activities. 🌸



NCW President welcomes NCW members during the Foundation Day Dinner

Hon. General Secretary's Report NCW General Assembly Meeting 2009 Annual Report for 2008



2008 was the European Year of Intercultural Dialogue which we celebrated together with our affiliated organisations, involving many sections of society. We kept this theme alive by organizing events which included discussions and presentations working closely with the Anna Lindh Foundation and the Emigrant's Commission.

NCW launched the **Vote for Women MEPs Campaign** to promote Maltese women's representation in

the European Parliament. NCW participated in **"The Fight Against Poverty"** project together with the European Documentation and Research Centre, University of Malta which ended with an international conference and publication of all articles. NCW worked on the project **"Say EU and....Action!"** with Fondazjoni Temi Zammit and Forum Malta Fl'Ewropa". NCW took part in the preparation of the **Plan of Action** of the Maltese Network of the Anna Lindh Foundation and participated in the **ARETUSA's** project in various European Cities. Undertakings for 2009 are the **Heritage Project** where women will be trained in conservation of wood and wooden artefacts and the **Small States of Europe** Congress.

NCW is now well established as an ICT centre. Conscious of the digital divide we extend to our members and others the opportunity to be computer literate. We offer ECDL level courses with European recognised certification. Our success rate is over 90%. "Basic Maltese" and "Basic English" courses are a great help to those who left the academic world to raise a family. Among our success stories are the participants who are continuing their studies at MCAST and University. **The Hon Dolores Cristina, Minister for Education, Culture, Youth and Sport**, presented certificates to 140 participants.

NCW studied: **The Rent Laws Reform; The Local Councils 2015; Pre -Budget Document 2009; Flexicurity and report on the National Reform Programme 2005-2008**. Consultations were held with our members and Affiliated Organisations. All proposals, recommendations, comments and concerns were sent to Government.

NCW Representatives had consultations with Ministers and Parliamentary Secretaries as well as MPs to discuss matters, such as gender equality, the family, preventive health care, education and social justice.

The first major NCW function of 2008 was the **Foundation Dinner** held at The Corinthia Palace Hotel, Attard. In March NCW celebrated International Women's Day with the traditional Mass by His Grace Archbishop **Mgr. Paul Cremona** at St Patrick's Church, Sliema. NCW together with Microsoft Malta in collaboration with the Ministry for Investment, Industry and information Technology launched **The Smart Women programme** at the Hilton Malta. NCW Social Issues Committee with the help of the Emigrants Commission identified **Eritrean women** for a personal beauty treatment at MCAST. **CAMERATA EUROPÆA Berlin** invited the Council to take part in an exhibition at the head offices of the Deutsche Bank during a concert with works by women composers.

NCW delegates had the opportunity to participate in **National Dialogue and Fora** to keep abreast of issues that affect the daily lives of women. Executive Members and Committee Members attended over 75 interactive workshops, seminars and conferences related to EU matters, changes in Social Policies, the Budget and the Environment.

NCW Sectional Committees which include **Education and Culture, Health and Well Being, Social Issues, Environment, Youth, and EU Affairs** organised a number of successful talks and activities during the year. Topics covered were: gender issues, preventive health management, education, family & work; consumer rights, environmental issues, persons with disability, youth and children,

communication & media, social inclusion, employment and EU citizenship. Reports are available in Il-Mara and NCW website.

MFSA collaborated with NCW to publicise opportunities for women in the financial field. NCW and the Russian Centre for Science and Culture organised a conference 'Sustaining Family Values in a Changing World'. NCW was honoured with a personal message from H.E. Dr Svetlana Medvedeva, spouse of the President of the Russian Federation. The National Council of Women was one of the supporting organisations for the breast care awareness campaign in October. NCW ended 2008 with an enjoyable Christmas Dinner, held at Le Meridien Hotel St Julians. NCW as members of the Forum of Civil Society Organisations organised a half day seminar on the Reform Treaty. A full list of conferences can be obtained from NCW Office.

Participation in **International Conferences** were undertaken by, Doreen Micallef, Grace Attard, Doris Bingley, Diane Xuereb, Lara Tonna, Ruth Falzon, Mariosa Vella Cardona, Marie Therese Zammit and Marie Demicoli. They visited Azerbaijan; Germany; Belgium; Egypt; Great Britain; Hungary; Jordan; Ljubljana; Morocco; Netherlands; Poland; Turkey; Slovenia. Valuable contacts and useful information were acquired for the Council. Funding was made possible through Anna Lindh Foundation, the Commonwealth Foundation, the European Economic and Social Committee, DG Employment, Social Affairs & Equal Opportunities, European Parliament and by the members themselves. Reports were published in the Newspapers, Il-Mara and on the website.

NCW has Special Consultative status with ECOSOC UN New York; European Economic and Social Committee Brussels; European Centre for International Council of Women; International Council of Women; The Commonwealth Foundation and ARETUSA European Network.

NCW has representation on **National Committees** among them: The National Commission for the Promotion of Equality, National Information Society Advisory Council, Malta Council for Economic and Social Development, Civil Society Committee, The Council for the Voluntary Sector, National Commission for Sustainable Development, Monitoring Committee Single Programming Document and Operational Programme 1 and the Occupational Health and Safety Authority. The expertise of our members is fully utilised on these committees.

At every AGM, a number of **resolutions** are approved. NCW receives many positive comments. Some resolutions have been incorporated in white papers. *The full text can be obtained from NCW Office.*

The Executive Committee, The Officers, The Central Committee and The Standing & Sectional committees have been very busy these last twelve months. We are pleased to note that the individual membership continues to grow at a fast rate. NCW has **30 Affiliated Organisations**. In 2008 we welcomed the "Personal & Social Development Teachers' Association" and the "Ramblers". Representatives meet with us and receive information on current subjects being addressed.

Publications and Communications

- The quarterly newsletter 'Il-Mara' is very popular locally and overseas.
- Maltese Newspapers publish NCW articles and press releases regularly.
- Our upgraded website, www.ncwmalta.com is also attracting much attention.
- The increase in communications via the e-mail shows a positive trend, which makes our work quicker and easier.
- We also receive publications from different EU DGs and the Commonwealth Foundation. Students who come seeking information at our office find these extremely useful.

NCW's work continues with much-valued contribution of its members and the constant co-operation of the Affiliated Organisations. 🌸

Doris Bingley
Hon General Secretary

53rd Session of the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) New York

The 53rd Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) kicked off on March 2, 2009 for two weeks, and brought together over 5,000 representatives from 460 organizations worldwide. Doris Bingley, Hon General Secretary NCW Malta represented the National Council of Women and the Affiliated Organisations. While the Commission presents NGOs with a unique policy space where they can meet, discuss and advocate with governments, their robust participation is critical to the commission's success as well as to follow-up action on its outcomes. In addition to official CSW meetings, this year's commission offered participants 297 parallel events that were organized by NGOs, the UN country missions and agencies. Delegates from across the world braved snowy roads and dropping temperatures to make their way to the UN to attend the official CSW meetings or the NGO events.

The CSW Commission's considered these themes:

- The priority theme “**The equal sharing of responsibilities between women and men, including care-giving in the context of HIV/AIDS**”;
- The emerging issue “**The gender perspectives of the financial crises**”
- The review theme “**Equal participation of women and men in decision-making processes at all levels**”

Ms Carolyn Hannan, Director of Division for the Advancement of Women emphasised that this was not the first time that the Commission had addressed the priority theme and that governments had already made a number of commitments on a variety of issues relevant to the theme. Ms Hannan stated that there is a need for further development on policy at global level in order to ensure the full implementation of commitments on national level. A challenge to the Commission is to narrow the gap between policies and their practical outcomes.

Doris Bingley attended events at the UN, the Church Centre and other nearby localities.

- She participated in the two day discussion of the monitoring group of the Commonwealth Gender Plan of Action 2005-2015.
- She attended two sessions on Ending Aids Stigma with one of the sessions concentrating on unpaid work in HIV Care.
- She took part in a discussion on *iKnow politics*. The E-discussion is on *Working with men to promote Women in Politics*. One can find it on www.iknowpolitics.org. The International Knowledge Network of Women in Politics (iKNOW Politics) is an on-line workspace designed to advance women in politics worldwide.
- She attended UNIFEM's Financial Crisis Workshop on reforming the international financial architecture and how women can respond to this global problem.
- She also attended “*Women and men: United to end violence against women*” which was the theme of this year's International Women's Day which was observed at the United Nations on 5 March 2009 and celebrated internationally on 8 March.

UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon highlighted this in his message marking International Women's Day: “Violence against women is also linked to the spread of HIV/AIDS. In some countries, as many as one in three women will be beaten, coerced into sex or otherwise abused in her lifetime. Women and girls are also systematically and deliberately subject to rape and sexual violence in war.” He added “We must stop the habitual and socially ingrained violence that mars lives, destroys health, perpetuates poverty and prevents us from achieving women's equality and empowerment. ... We must work together to state loud and clear, at the highest level, that violence against women will not be tolerated, in any form, in any context, in any circumstance. We need economic and social policies that

support women's empowerment. We need programmes and budgets that promote non-violence. We need a positive image of women in the media. We need laws that say violence is a crime, that hold perpetrators accountable and are enforced.”

UNIFEM Executive Director Inés Alberdi said “Violence against women undermines poverty reduction and development efforts; hampers women's agency and productivity; destroys their health; prevents girls from attending school, and being safe; and has been a silent driver of the rapid feminization of HIV and AIDS. It is no coincidence that the deadline for the Secretary-General's *UNiTE to End Violence against Women* Campaign is 2015, the deadline to achieve the eight Millennium Development Goals. In doing so, the campaign locates ending violence against women alongside the eight Millennium Development Goals”.

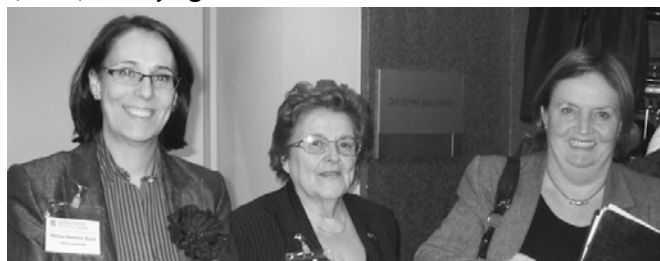
The UN Action initiative is designed to create greater awareness of these abuses and, ultimately, end sexual violence to make the world safer for women and girls. There are three main pillars:

- The first aspect of this initiative, country level action, involves country level support and efforts to build capacity and train advisers in gender-based violence programming and coordination, as well as support for joint UN programming in selected countries.
- Second, “advocating for action”, raises public awareness and generates political will to address sexual violence as part of the broader campaign to “Stop rape now.”
- The third aspect is the creation of a knowledge hub on sexual violence in conflict and effective responses.

For women around the world, the symbolism of **International Women's Day** has a wider meaning: it's an occasion to celebrate how far women have come in their struggle for equality and an opportunity to unite, network and mobilize for meaningful change. The purpose of this day is to recognize the fact that securing peace and social progress and the full enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms require the active participation, equality and development of women; and to acknowledge the contribution of women to the strengthening of international peace and security.

Doris Bingley noted that all the events referred to Beijing, Fourth World Conference of women in 1995, where women in decision-making rank among the most high profile. The progress of women in parliament to date is far from promising. Women constitute 18.4% of members of parliament. The increase is of 3.4% worldwide since 1995. If we were to continue at this pace it would take 135 years before gender parity is reached in parliament.

All present in New York are looking forward to 2010 when a comprehensive review and appraisal of progress will be made in the implementation of the **Beijing Platform for Action (BPfA) – Beijing +15.** 🌸



Carolyn Hannan Director, Division for the Advancement of Women (on the right) with Doris Bingley NCW Malta and Helen Reardon-Bond Director, Gender Equality Policy and Inclusion UK during the 53rd session of the Commission on the Status of Women in New York.

Resolutions approved at the Annual General Meeting January 2009

Maltese women candidates for the European Parliamentary Elections

Aware of the forthcoming June 2009 elections for the European Parliament, the EU Commission's Roadmap for Equality between Women and Men 2006-2010 stating as one of the six priority objectives 'Equal representation in decision-making', that the representation of women in political leadership is necessary to achieve equality, and that opportunities for fully utilising the potential of both men and women in politics will be of benefit to the Maltese society:

NCW calls on government to ensure that measures are taken to increase the number of female candidates nominated for the European Parliamentary Elections in June 2009, and calls on all political parties to take the necessary measures to ensure that the list of prospective candidates of their respective parties includes at least 30% female candidates.

SMEs: A favourable business environment: supporting enterprise and job creation 'Think Small First': A Small Business Act for Europe

Aware that, at a time when there is a global financial and economic crisis, it is companies, in particular SMEs, that are the most sensitive and at the same time the most important elements in terms of job creation and recovery capacity, and also aware that SMEs are a crucial part of the Maltese economy and a major source of employment, entrepreneurial skills and innovation,

NCW recommends the following proposals

- Adopt national legislation to give binding effect to the 'Think small first' principle proposed by the EU Commission in its communication 'Think Small First: A Small Business Act for Europe' with a view to the specific situation and needs of various types of SMEs (COM(2008) 394 final)
- Draw up a Small Business Act national plan (separate from the NRP)
- Appoint a national SME envoy charged with both managing

implementation of the of the Small Business Act European style (SBAE) and ensuring that national laws transpose EU legislation that comply with the fundamental principles of *Think small first*; (Malta Enterprise)

- Policy measures other than suitable financing that would help SMEs to grow and develop, recognising SMEs as the rule and not the exception
- The establishment of obligation to ease the administrative burden for companies
- More SME friendly public service through specialised SME training in particular in the VAT department
- Putting in place the framework conditions to the process of reaching the ambitious 3% of the GDP target for R&D spending in the next five years
- Pilot measures on energy efficiency for SMEs in the construction sector
- Ensuring that the specific needs of women entrepreneurs are addressed to increase their participation in economic activity
- Strengthening the innovation capacity of SMEs by facilitating access to technology and finance, providing innovative support services
- Improve the availability, access (meeting the needs of working mothers) and quality of adequate training offers for individuals both women and men and employers in particular taking into account the needs of SMEs
- Improving the physical infrastructure (roads and transport) to facilitate access to and by clients
- Nurturing a national entrepreneurial mindset through the National Curriculum at all levels of education for both women and men to encourage risk-taking, innovation and opting for non-traditional choices, involving companies in training and education schemes
- Ensuring effective and full use of Community instruments, either for the development of regional infrastructures or to support transitions in sectors affected by

structural changes through the European Social Fund (ESF) and the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) in particular in the Tourism and Manufacturing Industry

- Strengthening financial mechanisms by making better use of the European Investment Bank (EIB) in taking part of the risk on the SMEs and to look at ways in which banks in Malta can still further boost the support they provide to SMEs, in particular those run by women, as outlined in the European Commission's Small Business Act 2008

Legal framework for temporary workers

In view of the fact that a new EU Directive has been recently adopted with the specific objective of regulating the employment conditions of temporary workers, and that the primary aim of this Directive is to ensure the protection of temporary agency workers and to improve the quality of temporary agency work by ensuring that the principle of equal treatment is applied to temporary agency workers, aware of the need to establish a suitable legal framework for the use of temporary agency work with a view to contributing effectively to the creation of jobs and to the development of flexible forms of working, in view of the fact that temping work is another means of further increasing female participation in the labour market, and that a legal framework to regulate Temping Agency workers is of benefit to both employers and employees as all stand to gain from legal certainty:

NCW recommends that the Government, together with the social partners, ensures that Malta takes the necessary measures to put in place the legal framework in order to be in a position to fully transpose as expediently as possible this recent Directive for the benefit of both employers and employees by the deadline stipulated in the mentioned directive, that is, 5 December 2011.

Resolutions to be continued in the next issue of Il-Mara 🍷

International Women's Day

International Women's Day is a major day of global celebrations of the achievements of women past, present and future. The National Council of Women celebrated this occasion with a thanksgiving Mass on Saturday 5th March, at Our Lady of Victory Church, Valletta. During the homily, Rev. Paul Camilleri highlighted the importance and dignity of women in the gospel leading up to modern times. He invited us to reflect on the Blessed Virgin Mary's participation in the incarnation, thus acknowledging the importance of motherhood. He also made reference to various women role models in the history of the Church. Fr Camilleri outlined the birth of International Women's Day in 1909, following protests by American women workers in the textiles industry, against sweatshops and child labour. In 1911 International Women's Day was first celebrated in Europe after Clara Zetkin called for 8th March to be recognized throughout the world as International Women's Day. Despite the fact that women have secured the vote and have certain rights enshrined in law, women still have a long way to go before real equality is achieved.

The Council Statute and symbols representing the work of the committees were presented during the Offertory. Deceased NCW members were remembered, in particular those who passed away during the past year.



IWD Mass at Our Lady of Victory Church Valletta

Amongst many members and friends, NCW was honoured with the presence of the Belgian Ambassador and his family, the Chinese Ambassador's wife, delegations from the Chinese and Belgian Embassies, representatives of the Armed Forces, the NCPE Commissioner, and women candidates for the forthcoming EP elections, as well as representative of various affiliated organizations. 🌸

International Women's Day Message: CLOSING THE GENDER GAP - SHARING RESPONSIBILITIES

The debate on gender inequality is still quite visible on the local media in one way or another. In spite of the existing legislation which prohibits gender discrimination, statistics demonstrate that women remain lower paid than men, are under-represented politically, in the workforce and as entrepreneurs.

NCW calls for improvements in legislation relating to pregnant workers and the granting of maternity and parental leave to reconcile professional, private and family life, need to be addressed more effectively as highlighted in the European Commission message for World Women's Day 2009 with the theme 'Closing the Pay Gap'.

According to the WHO, children should be exclusively breastfed during the first six months of life, which means that the now proposed minimum of 18 weeks maternity leave should be critically considered and extended to a minimum of 24 weeks. The maximum limit of children for which any kind of leave can be taken needs to be revised. Take-up leave for fathers and other family members such as grandparents also need to be explored. Measures need to be practical and implementable. NCW calls for the sharing of responsibilities of all stakeholders: mothers, fathers and social partners.

Recommendations for increasing the number of women in entrepreneurial activity need to be considered also. Men and women do not go into business for the same reasons; moreover, women tend to start a business at about the age of 30, which is a difficult age for women as this is often when couples decide to start a family. Self-employed women and 'assisting spouses' urgently need measures to provide social protection equivalent to their self-employed partners.

NCW believes that the private sector needs to seek to be more informed of the advantages of job-sharing, teleworking, flexibility in take-up of leave and other new forms of work organization that can provide both parents with opportunities to meet their work and home commitment. Legislation on the probation period of pregnant mothers needs to be harmonised with EU legislation, in particular with regard to social protection.

Investing in women means investing in over 50% of the population. National medium to long-term policies to attract foreign investment should be coupled with investing in our human resources – women – so far undervalued and under-represented. 🌸

Women's Day: Europe keeps women's empowerment high on its global agenda

On the occasion of the International Women's Day on 8 March, which this year carries the theme 'Women and men united to end violence against women and girls', EU Commissioner Benita Ferrero-Waldner reaffirms the Commission's continuing political and financial commitment to fight for women rights. Empowerment of women is a topic which continues to be high on the EU's global agenda.

In 2008, Commissioner Ferrero-Waldner led an initiative of 40 world women leaders from politics, business and civil society that called for a new momentum in the effective implementation of UN Resolution 1325 on women, peace and security. Following their recommendation, UN Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon has agreed to convene a Ministerial Conference in 2010 to take stock of progress achieved and to examine ways to further enhance the impact of Resolution 1325. Ms Benita Ferrero-Waldner, European Commissioner for External Relations and Neighbourhood Policy said: "I am well aware that the full empowerment of women is still a distant call for many women around the world. Therefore, I remain strongly committed to maintaining our steady level of engagement and to ensuring that we keep our promises of fully mobilising our policy and financial tools to enhance UN Security Council resolutions 1325 and 1820 on women, peace and security. We cannot step down our game until each and every woman's rights are respected and protected throughout the world. Furthermore, we need to invest in the future by involving children in the process and raising their awareness on gender equality issues."

Speaking in particular on the UN Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000) on women, peace and security Commissioner Benita Ferrero-Waldner stated: "I whole heartedly welcome the UN Secretary General's agreement on the need to call for a follow up Conference on Resolution 1325. In the 10 years since the adoption of the UN Resolution, we have seen some progress in its implementation – such as the involvement of women in the Juba talks over northern Uganda or the participation of women groups in the peace-negotiations in Colombia, Nepal or Sri Lanka. However, enormous challenges remain as the implementation of the Resolution 1325 has unfortunately often been inconsistent and insufficient."

UN Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000) on women, peace and security plays an important role as it was the first resolution ever passed by the Security Council specifically addressing the impact of war on women, and women's contributions to conflict resolution and sustainable peace.

The eradication of gender-based violence is a specific priority of the European Union's human rights policy in third countries, as reflected in the adoption in December 2008 of new "EU Guidelines on Violence against Women and Girls and Combating all Forms of Discrimination against Them". Along with these Guidelines, for instance, the European Union is determined to urge third countries to enhance the fight against impunity and to support the protection and reintegration of victims, in close cooperation with civil society organisations and with women human rights defenders. This includes protection against harmful traditional practices, such as female genital mutilation. 🌸

Maltese Women Candidates for the European

Maria Camilleri

Maria Camilleri (born in 1952) was educated at Rabat Primary school, St. Theresa, Mdina and Maria Regina, Blata l-Bajda. She graduated with an Hons. Degree in Arts from the University of Malta and then pursued a career in teaching; she has also been involved in television and several cultural committees.



While still at university, Maria became interested in politics. She joined the Labour Party and held various posts, amongst them Vice-President of the Labour Party, a post which has only been filled once by a female member. In 1996–1998, she was a Member of Parliament, serving as an Assistant Whip and member of the Public Accounts Committee. Maria was also a Parliamentary Member of the Council of Europe, the first Maltese female parliamentarian serving in such a prestigious forum and for some time Vice-Chairperson of the Socialist Group. In 1997, together with the Imam of the Muslim community, Maria established the school for Maltese Muslim children. Today Miriam Albatool College is a symbol of peace, tolerance and respect between Christians and Muslims.

In campaigning for the MEP elections, her priorities include further development of high social standards and conditions, Education, Health and Environment, Gender Equality and the Mediterranean region.

Roberta Metsola Tedesco Triccas

Roberta is a 30-year-old mother of two boys – Alec and Luca - and is married to Ukko Metsola, a Finn. This is her second attempt to become an MEP on the PN ticket. Professionally, she is a lawyer and has specialised in European Law and Politics. She has served as Malta's Legal and Judicial Cooperation Attaché within the Permanent Representation of Malta to the European Union since 2004.

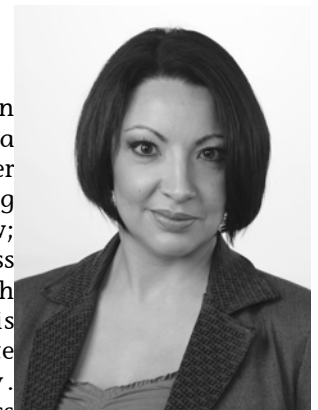


In her student years, Roberta formed part of various local student and youth organisations. She was then elected as Secretary General of the European Democrat Students - the student branch of the EPP. In 2002, she was elected vice-president of the Youth Convention on the Future of Europe that paved the way to her being closely involved in the negotiation and drafting of the Constitutional Treaty and, later, the Lisbon Treaty. This helped shape her view on European politics and understand just how important the role of the European Parliament can be.

She has been constantly active within the Nationalist Party, be it serving within the party's administration or accepting to run for the European Parliament elections in 2004 as a PN candidate in Malta's first MEP election. Despite not being elected then, seeing more than 5,000 people put their faith in her was an overwhelming experience that weighed heavily on her decision to accept to contest again.

Marthese Portelli

Marthese is 32 years old, lives in Birkirkara, is married and has a 3-year old son. She is a lawyer by profession, specializing in IT and commercial law; she is employed as Business Development Manager with a private company and is also a Director of a waste management company. Marthese lectures in Business Strategy and Development, Occupational Health and Safety, represents the Ministry for Justice and Home Affairs on the Council for Children, and is a Local Councillor. She is also President of the PN Executive Committee.



The central principles that Marthese is campaigning on are those related to the socio-economic factors of Maltese society, such as a value-driven economy based on freedom and responsibility; merging Economy and Family, with special attention to be given to SMEs, family-friendly and flexible working conditions, social security systems which help those in need (solidarity) and at the same time have a stimulating element for the unemployed to enter the labour market; creation of new job opportunities and new business; research and innovation - with special emphasis on closing the gap on creation of knowledge implementation. Marthese is also interested in working on food security and safety, climate change (with special emphasis on the quality of water), terrorism and its indirect effect on our country and illegal immigration. She would also like to see more emphasis on maximising EU funding and tapping into new niches for such funds.

n Parliament - June Elections

Claudette Abela Baldacchino

Claudette Abela Baldacchino is 35 years old, married to Kevin Abela, hails from Qrendi and is a graduate in Social Policy. She has worked in broadcasting, particularly in the One newsroom. She is Vice-Mayor of the Qrendi Local Council and is also Vice-President of the Association of Local Councils.



Claudette began her involvement in the Labour Party in 1987 in the Forum Zghazagh Laburisti, as Secretary of the Qrendi local committee and International Secretary of the Ghaqda Nisa Laburisti. She has been elected to the PL's National Executive since 1998. As a member of the EU Committee of the Regions, in 2008 Claudette was appointed by the European Socialist Party coordinator of the ESP manifesto for the European Parliament elections in June 2009. She has twice been appointed rapporteur by the Socialist group on documents that deal with equality and discrimination. Claudette is also Vice-President of the Socialist group in the Council of Europe's Local Government Congress, where she was also appointed rapporteur on documents regarding social affairs and rural developments.

Yvonne Ebejer Arqueros

Yvonne Ebejer Arqueros, 44 years, was born in Sliema and currently resides in Paola with her three children Andreas, Anastasia and Nicolas. She is employed by the Education Department as a PSD teacher in the primary sector, and has studied pedagogy and drama in Malta and the Ukraine.

Yvonne has long been active in the social sphere, and has also participated in civil society campaigns for Malta's membership in the European Union. She was the co-founder of the 'Women for Peace and Equality' and campaigned on various themes including the Palestinian question and women's rights in Malta and the Mediterranean. Yvonne has had long stints in voluntary work with Aġenzija Appogg, and Daritama, where she still works,



mostly in the youth field. Yvonne's main issues and concerns revolve around the social problems faced by the South of Malta and other similar problematic realities.

Yvonne is also a well-known and much-loved actress and has starred in the popular teleserials Viva l-Ministru u Villa Sunset. She has presented children's educational programmes on Education 22 and will soon be acting in another teleserial. Yvonne is fluent in Maltese, English, Italian and Spanish, and has a basic knowledge of French and Russian.

Marlene Mizzi

Marlene Mizzi was born in Rabat, Malta, is married to Magistrate Antonio Mizzi and has one daughter, Alexandra (also a lawyer). She was educated at St Dorothy's Convent, and graduated from the University of Malta with an Hons. degree in Economics in 1976. At the Maastricht School of Management, she read for a M.Phil and is presently reading for a Ph.D. Marlene is the author of a number of papers concerning Corporate Governance and has lead a number of important conferences on the subject, both in Malta and abroad.

Marlene started her work experience as a Time and Motion engineer with Heidemann Company Ltd, and worked in the banking sector in Finland, and Switzerland for UBS. In 1980 she set up her own retail and import company (specializing in children and maternity wear), which currently owns four retail outlets. Marlene is Chairman and part owner of Millennium Insurance Agency, set up in 1999. MIA is an agent for Lloyds of London.

Marlene was appointed Chairman of Sea Malta Company Ltd and its subsidiaries from April 1997 to December 2007. From 1990-January 2009, she was the only female member to be elected to the Council of the Malta Chamber of Commerce and Enterprise since 1990, where she was Honorary Secretary in 1992. She was also a Faculty member of the University of Malta. Marlene is a founder member of The Today Public Policy Forum and the Chairman of the Academic Council of the Malta Institute of Management.

In the run-up to the EP June elections, Marlene will be focusing on issues that include the rights of the citizen, the environment, gender issues and education. 🌸

Contributions received by the time of going to the press.

IL-KUNSILL
NAZZJONALI TAN-NISA



**Lejn
aktar NISA
fil-Politika**



Il-Vot tieghek ghan-nisa
fil-Parlament Ewropew - Ġunju 2009

EU launches campaign to tackle gender pay gap

The European Commission has today launched an EU-wide campaign to help tackle the gender pay gap. Across the EU economy, women earn on average 17.4% less than men. The simple concept of 'equal pay for work of equal value' is at the heart of the campaign being launched in the context of International Women's Day on 8 March to raise awareness of the pay gap, its causes, and how to tackle it.

"The gender pay gap has multiple causes and needs multiple solutions. Tackling it requires action at all levels and a commitment from everyone concerned, from employers and trade unions to national authorities and every citizen. Our campaign will make people more aware of why women in Europe still earn so much less than men and what we can do about it," said EU Equal Opportunities Commissioner Vladimír Špidla. "In today's economic climate, equality between women and men is more important than ever. Only by reaping the potential of all our talents can we face up to the crisis," he added.

Equal pay for equal work is one of the European Union's founding principles. Enshrined in the Treaty of Rome in 1957, it was already the subject of a 1975 directive which prohibits all discrimination in all aspects of pay between women and men for the same work or for work of equal value. As a result, "simple and visible" cases of direct discrimination – differences in pay when a man and a woman are doing exactly the same job, with the same experience and skills, and same performance – have fallen a lot thanks to the effectiveness of European and national legislation on equal pay. But why then is there still a gender pay gap of 17.4% across the EU?

The gender pay gap represents the difference between average hourly pay for women and men before tax across the economy as a whole. It reflects ongoing discrimination and inequality in the labour market which, in practice, mainly affects

women. For example, women's work is still often seen as less valuable than the work that men do and women often work in sectors where wages are, on average lower than those dominated by men, for example in a supermarket female cashiers usually earn less than the store men.

The pay gap also reduces women's lifetime earnings and pensions causing poverty in later life. 21% of women aged 65 and over are at risk of poverty compared to 16% of men. The campaign aims to raise awareness of the pay gap and how it can be tackled. To reach out to citizens, employers and workers, the campaign will promote good practices on the pay gap from around Europe and distribute a campaign toolbox for employers and trade unions at European and at national level. Other activities include the campaign website, advertising in European press and a poster campaign.

It comes as a follow-up to the Commission's 2007 policy communication on the pay gap, which analysed the causes of the gap and identified courses of action at EU level. The Communication underlined the need to raise awareness of the pay gap and how it can be tackled by acting at all levels, involving all stakeholders and focusing on all contributing factors.

Annual report on equality

The 2009 report on equality between women and men – also presented by the European Commission today – confirms that despite some progress on gender equality, significant gaps still remain in several areas. While the employment rate of women has been steadily rising over the last years (now 58.3% for women against 72.5% for men), women still work part-time more often than men (31.2% for women and 7.7% for men) and they predominate in sectors where wages are lower (more than 40% of women work in health, education and public administration – twice as many as men). However, women represent 59% of all new university graduates.



NCW President discussing equality issues with Social Affairs and Gender Equality Commissioner Vladimír Špidla

Women and men in decision-making

Meanwhile, a new expert report prepared for the Commission confirms that women are also highly under-represented in economic decision-making and in European politics. The central banks of all 27 EU Member States are led by a male governor. The under-representation of women at the top level is heightened in big business where men account for nearly 90% of the board members in leading companies (constituents of the blue-chip index in each country) – a figure which has barely improved in recent years. The proportion of women members of national parliaments (single/lower house) has risen by around half over the last decade, from 16% in 1997 to 24% in 2008. The European Parliament is just above this figure (31% women). On average, men outnumber women among ministers in national governments by around three to one (25% women, 75% men).

MEMO/09/91 <http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference>

Further information: Pay gap campaign website; <http://ec.europa.eu/equalpay>

2009 annual report on equality between women and men; <http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=418&langId=en>

Women in European Politics - time for action http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/publications/booklets/equality/pdf/ke8109543_en.pdf

Video News Releases on the gender pay gap and women and men in decision-making <http://www.tvlink.org> Brussels, 3 March 2009 ♡

Literary Evening on the Occasion of International Women's Day

The National Council of Women in conjunction with *Ghaqda Poeti Maltin* organized a Literary Evening at the Art Manufacture and Commerce Society Hall Valletta on March 20th as part of the activities commemorating International Women's Day. The evening hosted by *Ghaqda Poeti Maltin* Secretary Charles Magro, featured poetry readings related to different aspects of a woman's life. Beside the poetry readings mezzo soprano Miriam Camilleri accompanied by pianist Joanna Galea provided music for the evening. NCW President Grace Attard, NCW members, Lina Brockdroff, Georgina Aquilina, Imelda Serracino Inglott, Therese Cassola, and members of *Ghaqda Poeti Maltin* read out their beautiful and inspiring poetry which made the audience appreciate the richness of poetic verses. NCW President Grace Attard

augured more similar evenings and thanked everyone for their literary contributions and participation. ♡



Literary Evening *Celebrazzjoni Jum il-Mara* organised by *Ghaqda Poeti Maltin* in collaboration with NCW on the occasion of International Women's Day held on Friday 20 March 2009

Membri Maltin fil-Parlament Europew MEPs - 5 Snin Wara

Simon Busuttil

Matul iz-zmien li ghamilt bhala Membru Parlamentari Ewropew indirizzajt diversi kwistjonijiet fejn jidhlu d-drittijiet tan-nisa u kelli wkoll l-opportunita' li nivvota diversi drabi favur inizjattivi godda fil-Parlament Ewropew li jsahhu d-drittijiet tan-nisa.



Konkretament hemm zewg kwistjonijiet partikolari fejn hdmu u ghadni qed nahdem biex jissahhu dawn id-drittijiet f'Malta, anki jekk hemm bzonn permezz ta' bidla fil-ligi Maltija.

L-ewwel kienet dwar nisa tqal li jkun ghadhom fuq probation. Jien sostnejt li skond il-ligi Ewropea l-Istati Membri m'gandhomx jippermettu li mara tqila titkecca mix-xoghol waqt il-probation. Minkejja dan f'Malta jidher li din ir-regola ma kienitx qeghda tigi applikata ghan-nisa tqal li qeghin fuq probation. Dahhalt il-Kummissjoni Ewropea fil-kwistjoni li qabliet mieghi li mara tqila ma tistax titkecca mix-xoghol anki jekk tkun fuq probation. Il-kaz ghadu ghaddej.

It-tieni kienet dwar x'jigri jekk il-maternity leave jaqa' fl-istess zmien tal-leave annwali. Jintilef? Jien nggid li m'gandux jintilef ghas-sempli raguni li jahbat mal-leave normali u qed nahdem biex ma jintilifx. Dwar dan hemm ukoll sentenza tal-Qorti Ewropea li ssahhah l-argument tieghi.

Jekk nerga' ninghata fiducja fl-elezzjoni tas-6 ta' Gunju dawn huma kazijiet konkreti li se nkompli nahdem fuqhom.

John Attard Montalto

The experience of being a Member of the European Parliament is unique. The experience was especially special for two reasons. Firstly, I was one of a team of five Maltese who were pioneers. It is a fact that a year before the elections of June



2004, I had been appointed an observer to the European Parliament. Also, when Malta became a member of the European Union I had the honour to be nominated one of the first members of the European Parliament by the House of Representatives, but in reality my mandate started in earnest at the end of June 2004, a couple of weeks after having been elected.

I had been appointed the first Head of Delegation of the Labour Party team. It was my suggestion that we should share this office and Louis and Joe were kind enough to nominate me.

Indeed, when I attended the first meetings of the Heads of Delegation I was amused as it appeared that the Malta delegation of the Labour Party was the unknown quantity. For years the Party had campaigned for an alternative relationship with the European Union, yet within a year it changed its position and in 2004 was able to achieve one of the most memorable electoral victories ever. The task ahead was to attain mutual respect and become an integral part of the European process.

The second reason why this experience was unique is a personal one. I was the only member who had previously had a political career in the House of Representatives. After seventeen years I had chosen a different political path. Participating in European politics one learns the importance, if not the art, of consensus. No party has a majority in the European Parliament. The Executive (Government) is not part of the Legislature (Parliament). This does not mean that confrontational politics is inexistent, but the style is completely different. And that makes all the difference.

Louis Grech

Louis Grech ghandu track record ta' xoghol siwi fil-Parlament Ewropew, kif konfermat meta fl-2006 il-European League of Geneva vvotatu l-Ahjar MPE Malti. L-akbar proġett tieghu kien it-tfassil tal-Bajit ta' l-Unjoni Ewropea ghas-sena 2007



ghal spiza ta' €126bn. Izda huwa ghamel kontributi sinjifikanti fuq materji oħra bhall-immigrazzjoni legali (fondi adegwati għall-Frontex, għajjuna lil pajjiżi bħal Malta li huma milquta sew mill-problema, it-twaqqif ta' agenzija għall-ażil), l-izvilupp reġjunali (Objective One status għal Malta), il-VAT fuq it-taxxa tar-reġistrazzjoni tal-vetturi f'Malta, materji ambjentali (it-Triq ta' l-Għadira, it-trattament ta' l-iskart), u l-bidla fil-klima (fond ġdid Ewropew). F'hafna kazi s-suggerimenti u proposti tieghu kienu adottati mill-Parlament Ewropew u mbagħad mill-Kummissjoni.

Louis Grech huwa l-Kap tad-Delegazzjoni Laburista fil-Parlament Ewropew, kif ukoll Vici-President tal-Kumitat għall-Affarijiet Ekonomiċi u Monetarij, barra li huwa membru jew sostitut membru f'hafna sotto-kumitati u delegazzjonijiet.

Louis Grech iddistinga ruhu f'għadd ta' setturi bhall-avjazzjoni, it-turizmu, konsulenza finanzjarja, u relazzjonijiet industrijali. Huwa kien ċermen ta' diveri intrapriżi u membru tal-bordijiet ta' hafna oħra. Ir-rwol tieghu bħala kaptan ta' l-industrija kiseb għarfien meta fl-2002 ingħata l-unur ta' Personalità tat-Turizmu tas-Sena.

Louis Grech jara l-prijoritajiet tieghu għall-hames

snin li ġejjin bħala (1) l-Irkupru Ekonomiku, sabiex Malta u ċ-ċittadini tagħha jkunu jistgħu jaspiraw għal livell ta' għajxien aktar komparabbli ma' l-aqwa fl-Ewropa; (2) l-Integrazzjoni tal-Perspettiva Soċjali fix-xogħol ta' l-UE, sabiex iċ-ċittadini u l-familji tagħhom ma jibqgħux sempliċi statistika izda jsiru l-fokus tal-politika; (3) il-Harsien ta' l-Ambjent, sabiex Malta ma tibqax fil-qiegħ fejn jikkonċerna ambjent aħjar għaċ-ċittadini; (4) l-Immigrazzjoni Llegali sabiex l-UE twestaq il-wegħdiet tagħha u tgħin lil Malta b'mod konkret u fil-waqt; u (5) il-Harsien tal-Konsumatur, sabiex iċ-ċittadini Maltin igawdu drittijiet reali meta jixtru oġġetti u servizzi u jkollhom il-protezzjoni ta' Regolaturi b'saħħithom.

David Casa

Sa min qabel ma sirna membri fl-Unjoni Ewropea hdmu sabiex Malta ssib posta fl-Ewropa. F'dawn l-aħħar hames snin, bħala r-rappreżentant tiegħek fil-Parlament Ewropew, hdmu flimkien ma' shabi deputati oħra minn pajjiżi differenti, ksibt l-esperjenza u ghamilt hilti kollha sabiex pajjiżna jibda ssaraf s-shubija f'suċċessi kbar mall-ewwel.



Mill-Parlament Ewropew, kont parti mill-hidma sabiex pajjiżna introduċa l-munita ewro sa mill-1 ta' Jannar 2008. B'konsegwenza ta' dan, f'it tax-xhur wara, ġejt fdat minn fost Parlament shih, biex inhejji rapport importanti dwar id-dhul ta' l-ewro fis-Slovakkja. Deputat Malti kien fdat b'responsabilita' daqshekk importanti u l-vuci ta' Malta nstemgħet waqt li ingħatat prova ċara li d-deputati tal-Partit Nazzjonalista fil-Parlament Ewropew tassew jagħmlu d-differenza

Dan ma kienx kollox għaliex kelli responsabilitajiet oħra importanti. Insemmi fost oħrajn ir-rapport dwar il-fond finanzjarju tas-sajd, li għalih jien kont rapporteur tal-Parlament Ewropew. Permezz ta' dan ir-rapport ibbenefikaw is-sajjieda Maltin u Għawdxin. Kont ir-rappreżentant tiegħek f'oqsma oħra, bħall-ambjent, il-bidla fil-klima, is-saħħa u l-immigrazzjoni fost sugġetti oħra.

Hdmu u għadni qed nahdem biex dawk il-haddiema li jispicċaw bla xogħol minhabba s-sitwazzjoni finanzjarja ekonomika madwar id-dinja, jigu mharsa mall-ewwel u jinstabilhom xogħol alternattiv mall-ewwel.

Hdimna madankollu fadal aktar xi ssir u issa jehtieg li intennu l-IVA ta' hames snin ilu billi nivvutaw għall-kontinwita' fl-Ewropa sabiex inkomplu niksbu l-ġid għal pajjiżna. Bħala r-rappreżentant tiegħek fil-Parlament Ewropew, bl-esperjenza li ksibt, lest li nkompli nahdem biex int tkompli tagħmel suċċess mis-shubija. 🍀

The ARETUSA connection

It is indeed a rare occurrence to see representatives of different countries putting aside all national legal and cultural divergences and working together towards one common objective. In December 2008, I had the privilege to witness such an event during the ARETUSA workshop held in Budapest between the 11th and 12th December 2008.

ARETUSA is a network of associations hailing from different EU countries working towards one common aim – that of promoting equality between men and women. Its member associations have promoted networking activities specifically designed to reach this objective and to eradicate once and for all the denial of equal dignity for women. With this in mind, the member associations have promoted networking activities specifically designed to prevent and combat trafficking of prostitution or other forms of sexual exploitation.

During the above-mentioned workshop culminating in a conference entitled WOMEN AND MEN: SUPPLY AND DEMAND, the ARETUSA group discussed various themes including the prevention of sexual exploitation in EU countries, women in politics and women within the labour market. All ARETUSA members agreed that it is extremely difficult to halt the trafficking of women and children for sexual exploitation unless EU countries adopt a strong legal stance against prostitution itself. We need to acknowledge that no harmonisation exists at an EU level in so far as the legalisation or otherwise of prostitution is concerned. This has resulted in divergent rules across Europe with some countries such as the Netherlands legalising prostitution itself. On the other hand, Sweden has gone all out to halt prostitution by penalising any person who seeks to purchase the body of another person for his own pleasure. This means that the Swedish model has targeted not only the supply side but even the demand side of prostitution itself. With such radical divergences in Europe's legal systems in so far as prostitution is concerned, the group acknowledged that the eradication of trafficking across Europe will be no easy task. The EU's intervention is therefore sorely needed in order to bring about at least a minimum amount

of harmonisation, even if in the form of guidelines in so far as prostitution and trafficking is concerned.

I could not hide my embarrassment and disappointment when the discussion fell on the theme "Women in Politics". It was an embarrassing moment to note that statistics show that Malta has the lowest female representation in Parliament when compared with other EU countries. Statistics show that female representation increased in those countries that have introduced a proportionate system and a quota within the political parties themselves or in the election directly. The need for research to have statistics in hand was identified as an important factor. The guilt feeling experienced by a lot of women in politics for not dedicating sufficient time to their families was prevalent across all women interviewed by a Hungarian researcher. The group concluded that a shift in mentality even by women themselves is needed in order to get more women elected in politics for the benefit of the female gender.

In so far as labour policies are concerned, I must acknowledge that whilst the Maltese government has introduced laudable measures in order to assist the reintegration of women in the labour market, much still is left to be done. I am referring in particular to more incentives in the form of paid maternity leave as well as other benefits available to women for them to balance work and private life. I must note, however, that in so far as childcare facilities are concerned we do not fare badly when compared with other new EU Member States.

On a final note I must say, that though much remains to be done across Europe in order to ensure equality between men and women, the work being done by the ARETUSA group is surely a huge step in the right direction. Well... divided we fall, but united we'll surely get there! ♥



Dr. Mariosa Vella Cardona M'Jur LL.D.

Dr. Mariosa Vella Cardona M'Jur LL.D.

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Doris Bingley - Hon General Secretary
Doreen S. Micallef BSc. AIMS

Finance

Grace Attard - President
Therese Cassola - Hon Treasurer
Marie Demicoli - Assistant Treasurer
Jean Killick B.A. (Hons) - Member
Mary Rose Zahra - Membership
Doris Bingley - Hon General Secretary

Meeting of the NCW Executive Committee 2009 with Hon Lawrence Gonzi Prime Minister

On the 23 February, NCW President and members of the Executive Committee paid a courtesy call on the Prime Minister, the Hon Dr Lawrence Gonzi. During the meeting, Grace Attard gave a general overview of the work NCW is carrying out through the sub-committees on

Health, Education, Environment, Social Issues, Youth and EU Affairs. She also highlighted the importance of the theme for 2009: Family and Work Balance for women and men: Sharing Responsibilities.

The President also spoke about the links NCW has established with various local and international councils and organisations namely MCESD, VO Council, MEUSAC, NCPE, EESC, ECICW, the EU Commission, the EU Parliament and the Commonwealth Foundation with whom NCW networks.

A poster of the NCW Vote for Women MEPs Campaign in preparation for the EU Parliamentary elections next June was presented to the Prime Minister. During the meeting there was an interesting exchange of ideas with the members of the delegation on the Work Programme for 2009 and the resolutions approved during the AGM.

The Prime Minister was pleased to note that NCW is working towards the participation of women in all areas as reflected in the approved resolutions, including the reform of Primary Education, Immigration, the Lisbon Strategy, ICT Energy Efficiency among others. Dr Gonzi urged NCW to continue with its valid contributions on matters of national interest, in particular on issues concerning alternative energy and efficiency ♡



NCW President and members of the Executive Committee discuss the work programme for 2009 with the Prime Minister the Hon. Dr Lawrence Gonzi

NCW Courtesy Call on the President of Malta

As part of the events celebrating the 45th anniversary of NCW's establishment, a delegation paid a courtesy call on H.E. Dr Eddie Fenech Adami, President of Malta. On this occasion, NCW gave a donation to the President for the Malta Community Chest Fund. Whilst thanking the President for his interest in the Council's work since its establishment in 1964, Grace Attard gave a brief overview of the Council's development throughout the years, in particular its adaptation to gender equality needs in Malta in the context of the international and European scenarios.

H.E. was presented with a copy of the Council's resolutions approved during the AGM on which the work plan for 2009 is based. NCW President also highlighted the Council's work over the years to ensure opportunities for women in all areas including environment, energy, education, social and economic issues, youth and not least women's contribution to the global economic crisis. The President was also presented with publicity posters as part of the Council's campaign to raise more awareness of the role of Maltese women in the European Parliament. The President of Malta expressed his appreciation for

the enthusiasm and commitment of the Council in taking such an active role in society, in particular in line with EU policies and practices that will benefit not only women but also society at large. ♡



NCW President and members of the Executive Committee present a donation to the President H.E. Dr Edward Fenech Adami for the Malta Community Chest Fund.

NCW YOUTH COMMITTEE 2008/2009 - ANNUAL REPORT



**Diane Xuereb
(Coordinator)**

The members of the Youth Committee are Diane Xuereb (Coordinator), Elaine Dutton, Charlene Mifsud, and Marcette Pule'. Its main objective is to build a committee of young NCW members to work together and address issues relevant to youth in today's society.

Topics discussed

included:

- an internal discussion on abortion and contraception and how these issues have become critical for women nowadays. NCW has tackled this subject numerous times over the years, organizing a

seminar on the subject and through advocacy with various stake-holders and social groups.

- Services provided by HOPE Crisis-Pregnancy Support: The volunteers in HOPE offer assistance to women who are facing an unexpected pregnancy and are considering abortion. The approach is non-judgemental and confidential, and is meant to help the person seeking help make a free and informed choice.

The Youth Committee attended the Youth Week which was organised during the first week of November 2008 by the Malta Association of Youth Workers. Members of the Youth Committee actively participated in a talk on self-image for teenagers.

The Youth Committee have proposed the following future topics and activities:

- Young women and positions in high decision-making roles;

- Co-operation between NCW and the Health Promotion Department through the website being created by the latter on young women's health;

- Co-operation with the PSD Association;

- Monitoring of issues at EU level that have relevance locally such as sport, gender, health, soft skills and other salient issues.

- A proposed workshop to address sexual health issues amongst adolescents - *Parenting Skills on Adolescent Sexuality*. Three sessions will deal with:

- ♦ Adolescent development & the beauty of sexuality, and physical, social and emotional consequences of early sexual behaviour.

- ♦ Methods of prevention and misconceptions surrounding them and treatment, check-ups and services available.

- ♦ Gender orientation. ♀

Social Issues Committee Report-2008

The members of the Social Issues Committee were Maria Camilleri (Coordinator), Ingrid Azzopardi (Convener), Marlene Ebejer (Central Committee Representative), Marie Therese Zammit (Rapporteur, later replaced by Patricia Falzon), Maria Ruggier, Blanche Martin and Therese Micallef. This year's main objective was to hold informative talks to highlight social issues across the spectrum of society as they affect the socially excluded, children and the family in general.

Talk

The Committee organized a talk in April on **Family Law**, by Dr Lydia Zerafa who specializes in this subject. The talk was interesting and interactive, and participants asked very interesting questions which raised awareness about the many loopholes in the law which allow for discrimination, especially against the wife.

As a result of this talk, a sub-committee was appointed to hold a brain-storming discussion with the aim of highlighting any needed changes to minimize loopholes in the Family Law. Apart from the committee members, this sub-committee included two participants whose knowledge and experience in this subject was found very useful. A number of proposals were drawn up which were passed on to Dr Zerafa for her corrections/approval. Once the changes being proposed are verified, these will be passed on to the NCW Executive as a proposal to be made to government

Computers to be donated to Homes for the Elderly

HSBC has confirmed that it will donate its redundant computers but the project has been stalled as so far no sponsorship has been found for the maintenance of these computers. **Absenteeism**

Collaboration with the Education Committee.

World's Women Day

On the occasion of World Women's Day, the Director of Community Services at MCAST offered the services of her students in the Hair and Beauty course. With the help of the Emigrants Commission, the Social Issues Committee identified a few Eritrean ladies to benefit from this offer. This activity, which was very much appreciated by these ladies, also served as a learning experience for the MCAST students who had the opportunity to learn about African hair.

Mother's Day Activity

The Committee, together with Razzett tal-Hbiberija, organized a treat for a few mothers of children with disability. The main objective of this activity was that of showing solidarity with these mothers to provide some relaxation and relief from their daily caring routine.

A number of mothers, together with Dr Rashid (Razzett's manager), were driven from Razzett tal-Hbiberija to the Eden Super Bowl where they spent two hours enjoying themselves bowling. It was an opportunity also to get to know each other and share their experiences. Once back at the Razzett, these mothers were provided with a meal sponsored by HSBC.



**Maria Camilleri
Coordinator**

Christmas Activity

The Social Issues Committee organized a Christmas Activity held on 20th December 2008, the aim of which was to show solidarity with families who are going through difficulties. The Committee members collected lunch vouchers, food items, shoes, toys, and books which were delivered to two NGOs who work directly with people in the community who are in real need, these being the Sisters of Madre Theresa in Cospicua and Jeanne Antide Foundation in Tarxien. Both organisations were very pleased with this initiative and extremely thankful towards NCW.

Radio Interview - Rape Crisis Centre

Late in the year, the Coordinator took part in an interview on **Dirett Parlament** about the need of a **Rape Crisis Centre** since so far this Centre has not yet been set up even though the need for it has long been felt. In fact, NCW had suggested it some years ago but so far, this matter has not yet materialized. Since the number of cases is, thankfully, not alarming, NCW proposes a clinic preferably at Mater Dei Hospital consisting of two rooms where the victims are examined and interviewed by a multi-disciplinary team which should be ON CALL for when the need for it arises. NCW also insists on training of staff who deals with such delicate cases.

Seminars and Conferences

The Coordinator attended the seminar "Skills for the Future" (held by the National Commission for Higher Education (NHCE)), and "Working together to Combat Domestic Violence" (held by the Commission on Domestic Violence). ♀

Reports of Committees to be continued in the next issue of Il-Mara



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DIARY OF EVENTS JANUARY 2009 TO MARCH 2009

January

- 06th MEUSAC Civil Society Fund 2008 Presentation of Cheques by Hon. Dr. Chris Said
- 09th Reception, Labour Party Headquarters, Hamrun
- 12th Health Committee Meeting
EU Affairs Committee Meeting
- 13th Environment Committee Meeting
- 14th Project Living Equality NCPE Final Conference - Jean Killick attended
- 15th Programme of the Czech EU Presidency Public Dialogue
EESC Plenary. Grace Attard participated
- 16th Last 2008 Executive Committee Meeting
- 22nd EESC Study group on Promoting Equal Treatment in Health and Safety at the Workplace.
Grace Attard participated
- 20th Health Minister John Dalli interviewed by Vanessa Macdonald at a Business Breakfast meeting. Doris Bingley attended.
- 26th Forum: Enterprise Europe and the Crisis by Mr Ernest Antoine Seilliere, President of Business Europe.
EESC Study Group on Partnership between Educational Institutions and Employers. Grace Attard participated
- 30th NISCO: Forum on Green ICT - Dr. Mariosa Vella Cardona Attended
Forum of Civil Society Organisations at MCESD; Grace Attard and Doris Bingley attended,
- 31st National Council of Women Annual General Meeting at the Victoria Hotel, Sliema

February

- 01st Manifestazzjoni favur il-Hajja; President Grace Attard made a presentation on behalf of NCW
- 4th EESC Social Affairs Committee (SOC); Grace Attard participated
- 06th President Grace Attard and General Secretary Doris Bingley meet Mr. Alfred Camilleri, Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Finance, to discuss entrepreneurship for women
- 13th NGO Forum meeting at MCESD with Dr. Grace Grima and Ms Micheline Sciberras (DG's Ministry of Education) to discuss document on Transition from Primary to Secondary Education. Grace Attard and Doris Bingley participated
- 14th Discussion: MEUSAC Sectoral Committees, MCESD and implications of the Voluntary Organisations Act. Grace Attard and Doris Bingley participated.
- 17th Dr. J. Cassar, Parliamentary Secretary for Health, meets President Grace Attard, General Secretary Doris Bingley and the Midwives Association Representative Margaret Abela.
- 18th Grace Attard and Doris Bingley meet Mr. Magri (Ghaqda Poeti Maltin).
Ms Monica Cummings, Attache for Political, Economic and Commercial Affairs and Ms Anna Darmanin Political Economic Specialist, Embassy of the United States of America meet NCW President Grace Attard and the Hon. General Secretary Doris Bingley at NCW Centre
- 19th 1st 2009 NCW Executive Committee Meeting
- 20th Foundation Day Dinner at The Palace Hotel, Sliema. Guest of honour Mrs Catherine Gonzi. Honorary Presidency bestowed on Dame Blanche Martin
- 23rd NCW Executive Committee meets the Prime Minister Dr. Lawrence Gonzi at the Office of the Prime Minister, Auberge de Castille. They present a copy of NCW Resolutions 2009.
- 24th Mr. Patrick Pace from the Ministry for Rural Affairs meets with Environment co-ordinator Marie Demicoli and Therese Cassola
- 25th ECO CAFÉ event at NCW Centre
EESC Plenary - Grace Attard participated

26th

The Hon. General Secretary Doris Bingley represents NCW Malta at the 53rd Session of the UN Commission for the Status of Women, New York

27th

Conferment of Hon.Causa degree by University of Malta on Mr. Bernard Kouchner, Minister for Foreign and European Affairs of France.

1st 2009 Central Committee Meeting

March

03rd

President Grace Attard attends the EU Commission Launch in Brussels "Closing the Pay Gap" on the occasion of World Women's Day

05th

Meeting at Gnien Herbert Ganado on pPlanting of trees with Mr. Patrick Pace and Mr. Joe Bonello. Environment Committee co-ordinator Marie Demicoli and Therese Cassola participated.

MLP WWD Conference: "Il-Familji u l-Htigijiet taghhom fiz-zminijiet tal-lum". Health Committee Nadya Mangion and Social Affairs Committee co-ordinator Maria Camilleri participated

MNP Seminar for WWD: NCW Executive members Therese Cassola and Jean Killick attended.

TRESMED Euromed Project in Segovia, Spain. Grace Attard participated

06th

NCPE 5th Annual Conference Business Breakfast - Jean Killick attended.

Super 1 Programme on the Rights of the unborn Child. Social Affairs Committee co-ordinator Maria Camilleri participated.

07th

Jum Il-Mara, NCW Mass at Our Lady of Victory Valletta

09th-14th

Hon. General Secretary Doris Bingley represents NCW Malta during Commonwealth Week.

12th

MEUSAC-Employment, Social Policy and Health Meeting. NCW member Marie Demicoli participated. NCW position submitted to ESH Committee

13th

EESC group II meeting in Prague: Enhancing the role of the Voluntary Sector. Grace Attard participated

16th

The New Executive Committee meets H.E. the President of Malta Dr. Fenech Adami at the Palace, Valletta. A donation is presented to the President in aid of the Malta Community Chest Fund.

17th

A Round Table discussion on Positive Action organized within the context of the European Week against Racism at Marsa Open Centre. Executive Committee member Jean Killick attended.

18th

EESC Study Group meeting and Hearing on Research and Development for Competitiveness. Grace Attard participated

20th

Serata Letterarja fl- Okkazjoni ta' Jum il-Mara organised by NCW in collaboration with Ghaqda Poeti Maltin. Programme included poems by NCW members

MEUSAC meeting on Consumer Rights. Grace Attard and Doris Bingley participated and presented NCW comments representing consumers

24th

EESC member Grace Attard member of study group on Equal treatment between men and women engaged in an activity of self-employment capacity defended the opinion in the EESC Plenary

26th

NCW member and candidate for the EU Parliament, Roberta Metsola engaged in a discussion with NCW Members at NCW Centre

March Executive Committee

27th

Conference on children of parents affected by a mental illness entitled "Mental Illness in the Family – our Hidden Secret" on March 27th 2009 at Robert Sammut Hall, Floriana. Grace Attard attended.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

European Centre for the International Council of Women Spring General Assembly in Malta

- 23rd April Arrival of Delegates
 24th April Conference "Maltese Women in the European Parliament" at the Victoria Hotel Sliema - Registration at 8.30am till 13.30hrs
 Reception at the National Council of Women Centre Mountbatten Street Blata l-Bajda at 19.30hrs
 25th April ECICW General Assembly at the Victoria
 Gala Dinner at Hilton Malta St. Julians at 7.30pm for 8.00pm
 26th April Tree planting at Gnien Herbert Ganado Floriana at 11.00am
 Lunch at the Castille Hotel
 Cultural Tour of Vittoriosa at 14.30hrs

a) Conference at the Victoria Hotel, b) Reception at NCW Centre, c) Tree Planting at Gnien Herbert Ganado and d) Tour of Vittoriosa are free of charge for Members however Registration/Booking is strictly required. Please call or e-mail NCW Office, details below.

**Gala Dinner at the Hilton Malta St. Julians is 35 Euro per person.
 We urge members to attend and welcome our foreign guests.
 Information and booking forms have been sent to all members.
 Please return booking form with your choice of menu to NCW Office
 not later than Tuesday 21 April**

Eco Café Wednesday 29th April 2009

The Environment Committee will be holding another Session of the popular ECO CAFÉ at NCW centre at 17.30 hrs. Members and friends will have the opportunity to share their gardening experience and any other information on flora, fauna and gardening methods on Wednesday 29th April, 2009. The Committee hopes to invite a guest speaker.

For further information please **phone NCW Office.**

Spring Gozo Outing on Saturday 16th May 2009, limited number

Kindly phone the office for further information about this outing.
 Bus leaves Blata l-Bajda at 7.00am.

For info and booking contact the office.

Tel: 21248881 / Fax: 21246982
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