

Founded 1964

Il-Mara

Newsletter of the National Council of Women - Malta



NCW President Grace Attard and Hon. General Secretary Doris Bingley with Mr. R. Gallimore



NCW Executive Committee with H.E. the President of Malta Dr. George Abela



The Hon. Dr. Louis Galea, Speaker of the House of Representatives, Mrs. Galea, Grace Wedekind, ECICW President, at the NCW Conference on women in Decision-Making



ECICW delegation during the tree planting ceremony at San Anton Gardens

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NCW 45th anniversary celebrations

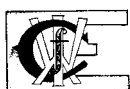
Members of



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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NEWSLETTER OF THE NATIONAL COUNCIL OF WOMEN - MALTA

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EDITORIAL

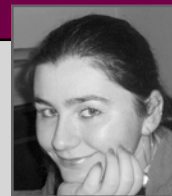
Dear Ladies,

The death in June of the Iranian Neda Soltan brought once more to the forefront the terrors of extremism of any kind. Extremism is dangerous, because as the name belies, such thought promotes fanatical political or religious views which can resort to extreme action. Neda Soltan, a young woman, with a bright future ahead of her, died protesting against the outcome of the 2009 Iranian presidential elections. Due to the internet, news of her horrifying death soon spread all over the world; one however should not forget the women whose deaths have not been documented, but who have also died martyrs for their cause.

A recent global gender gap report by the World Economic Forum has ranked Malta 83rd in the world. This put Malta behind countries like Ghana and Malawi, which to my eyes, seems rather extreme. I genuinely believe that although gaps exist when it comes to pay and labour market participation, and although Maltese women do not have a high representation in parliament, when it comes to actual respect in a family setting, a woman's opinion in Malta is becoming more valued and cherished. Very often, a family decision needs the go ahead from the mother - to quote, unquote from a popular comedy, "My Big Fat Greek Wedding", although the man might be the head of the family, the woman is the neck - and she steers the head wherever she wishes.

I wish you all a pleasant summer (hopefully swine flu free!),

Maria Giuliana Fenech



Il-Proċess ta' Konsultazzjoni fuq livell Ewropew mas-Socjetà Ċivili

Ftit tal-ġranet ilu eżercitajna għat-tieni darba d-dritt li neleġġu r-rappreżentanti tagħna fil-Parlament Ewropew. Kull cittadin Malti seta' jagħżel l-kandidati li jrid li jirrapreżentawh fil-Parlament Ewropew, b'mod demokratiku

Izda il-konsultazzjoni ma' tiqafx hawn. Wiehed mill-istituzzjonijiet ewropej hu il-Kumitat Ekonomiku u Soġjali Ewropew (KESE) fejn issir konsultazzjoni ma' rappreżentanti mill-pajjiżi kollha ta' l-UE propju fl-ewwel fazi tat-tfassil ta' proposta għal-ligi mill-Kummissjoni Ewropeja. Il-KESE jirrapreżenta it-tliet setturi tas-soċjeta', jiġifieri r-rappreżentanti ta' min jimpjega, tal-haddiema u tas-soċjeta' ċivili organizzata. Ir-rakkomandazzjonijiet tal-KESE jintbghatu lill-Kummissjoni biex jidhlu fid-direttivi u dokumenti oħra, li wara jersqu quddiem il-Parlament għall-vot. Strutturi oħra huma l-organizzazzjonijiet ewropej li jirrapreżentaw is-soċjeta' ċivili u r-riċerka u li għandhom konsultazzjoni diretta mal-Kummissjoni, bħal CEDEFOP, Eurofound, COFACE, ETUC, Business Europe u oħrajn.

Izda f'Malta x'qed isir biex insaħħu aktar dan il-proċess ta' konsultazzjoni? Ma nistax ma nfahħarx it-twaqqif għal darb'ohra tal-MEUSAC li bi istrutturi aġġornati, għall-ewwel darba f'Malta poġġiet fuq l-istess livell is-soċjeta' ċivili ma' diversi rappreżentanti oħra ta' pajjiżna fi proċess ta' konsultazzjoni. B'hekk l-organizzazzjonijiet tas-soċjeta' ċivili li huma l-aktar viċin tal-bżonnijiet taċ-ċittadini, qed ikunu ikkonsultati u bl-għajnuna ta' l-esperti tagħhom jistgħu isaħħu

l-opinjonijiet li jkunu qed jiġu diskussi, sew fil-kumitati settorjali kif ukoll fil-Core Group.

Il-Kunsill Nazzjonali tan-Nisa ta' Malta dejjem emmen li post Malta hu fl-UE. Fis-snin ta' qabel Malta saret membru, il-Kunsill hadem biex ikun hawn iżjed għarfien dwar diversi oqsma tal-UE. Illum, f'Malta l-NCW, flimkien ma' l-organizzazzjonijiet tas-soċjeta' ċivili ta' l-MCESD, qegħdin jiżviluppaw metodi ta' konsultazzjoni fuq livell ewropew aktar wiesa u nfasslu dokumenti fuq issues ta' importanza nazzjonali b'al is-saħħa u sigurtà fuq il-post tax-xogħol, flexicurity, id-drittijiet tal-konsumatur, żvilupp fil-qasam tal-impreditorjat għan-nisa u għall-irġiel, iż-żgħażaġh u x-xogħol, l-ambjent, ir-riċerka u il-holqien tax-xogħol, il-bżonnijiet ta' persuni b'dizabbiltà, il-kriżi finanzjarja, l-immigrazzjoni u hafna orajn.

Għad hemm aktar xi jsir? Iva! Nixtiequ naraw network tal-Maltin kollha li jaħdmu fl-istituzzjonijiet Ewropej; nixtiequ li jkun hawn aktar tagħrif fuq il-medja lokali; nixtiequ żviluppi ta' mezzi ta' konsultazzjoni permezz tat-teknoloġija (video conferencing) u nixtiequ li t-tfal fl-iskejjel jifhmu aktar xi tfisser tkun ċittadin ewropew. Dan u aktar ċerta ta' fiż-żmien qarib se jsehh!

Grace Attard, NCW, EESC

PRESIDENT’S MESSAGE



Dear Colleagues

Already more than six months of 2009 have passed, a time that has involved NCW in many national and international events and opportunities to promote gender equality.

I cannot but mention the MEP elections, which however close our female candidates were, and in spite of the NCW campaign, Malta failed to elect at least one woman, again underscoring Malta’s deficit at EU

level.
The number of women elected as European members of Parliament in the elections of 4 June 2009 has risen from 30% to 35%. This is a good result but not yet good enough and definitely one that does not reflect Malta’s state of affairs. (see table below)

NCW reiterates its call on government, political parties, social partners and society at large to address the gender decision-making deficit in political and economic areas seriously. If current fragmented measures are not producing positive results then we need to go for something more structured - a National Action Plan of Positive Action.

Why do Maltese still fear such measures are discriminatory? Is it because they hardly know what positive action means? Is it because they do not know they are temporary measures that have been successful in many European

countries? Is it because we are still rooted in the past and are afraid of taking the challenge, now and not on the eve of elections, local, national of European. NCW has always taken up a challenge and it will go on doing so

And now let us turn to what is in the near future: Budget 2010, European Year to combat Poverty and Social Exclusion 2010. In its consultation meetings, NCW is strongly advocating that in addressing the current recession, women should not bear the brunt, especially as a result of the high rate of participation of women in part time and precarious work. NCW has been studying the effects of in-work poverty from a gender perspective and we appeal to government to take these crucial aspects into consideration in Budget 2010 with the thrust that positive short term measures will bear fruit socially and economically in the aftermath to the recession. ♡

Grace Attard

The distribution of women in the European Parliament in the 7th legislature (2009-2014)

Member State	Number of MEPs	Number of women	%
Finland	13	8	61.54
Sweden	18	10	55.56
Estonia	6	3	50.00
Netherlands	25	12	48.00
Bulgaria	13	6	46.15
Denmark	72	33	45.83
France	17	7	41.18
Austria	17	7	41.18
Slovakia	13	5	38.46
Latvia	8	3	37.50
Germany	99	37	37.37
Belgium	22	8	36.36
Hungary	22	8	36.36
Portugal	22	8	36.36
Romania	33	12	36.36
Spain	50	18	36.00
UK	72	24	33.33
Cyprus	6	2	33.33
Greece	22	7	31.82
Slovenia	7	2	28.57
Ireland	12	3	25.00
Lithuania	12	3	25.00
Italy	72	16	22.22
Poland	50	11	22.00
Czech Republic	22	4	18.18
Luxembourg	6	1	16.67
Malta	5	0	0.00
Total	736	258	35.05

The Anna Lindh Foundation Malta Network.



Grace Attard, Dr. Andre Claret and Dr. Simon Mercieca at the meeting of Anna Lindh Foundation malta Network

The Anna Lindh Foundation Malta Network Meeting was held on the 16 May 2009. In his introduction, Dr. Simon Mercieca, Head of the Malta Network spoke about the work that is being done by an increasing number of organisations in Malta. Dr Mercieca also spoke about opportunities for funding for projects

During this meeting the Maltese members of the Foundation were introduced to the Anna Lindh Foundation Executive Director, Dr Andre Claret. Representatives of organisations explained the work that they are carrying out and also described projects on intercultural dialogue they are currently working on. The Executive Director spoke about the situation of the Anna Lindh Foundation, the challenges and difficulties it is currently facing and the importance of networking.

During the discussion, members spoke about plans for the future and how they can co-operate for more effective results, some of which are already being put in practice

Grace Attard, NCW President

NCW Education Committee Annual Report



Ruth Falzon

The members of the Education Committee are Ruth Falzon and Maud Muscat (Coordinators/Rapporteurs/Rapporteurs), CCR/MUR representative Marlene Housley, Fransina Abela Brincat, Jane Axisa, Annabelle Busuttill, Marlene Calleja, Rosemarie Carbone, Rosemary Dalli, Thelma Gera, Carmen Muscat, Josephine Ann Sammut, Marguerite Schranz, and Mary Rose Zahra.

The committee focused on educational issues but found difficulties with organising cultural events. It was agreed that three of the members would focus on these activities and coordinate with Ms. Marie Demicoli. It was suggested that cultural activities would cater as well for working women. The committee has planned a number of talks which have yet to be scheduled. A visit to Zejtun as part of the cultural events

The educational issues discussed were:

- Absenteeism (with committee of Social Issues) meetings were held with the Commissioner for Children, the Doctors' Association, and with Mr George Borg, Education Dept. A university student following a degree course in Youth and Community Studies has based her area of research for her final dissertation on absenteeism. She is supervised by Maud Muscat and is exploring in depth reasons for truancy and absenteeism from school.
- Inclusion and post-16 education/work for the disabled;
- Stress and schooling – still to be worked on;
- Parenting skills: there are many events on parenting skills being organized by different organizations and communities, however, very often, one is preaching to the converted and the people we really want to reach do not attend. The Committee recommends that Parenting Skills courses are held on an annual continuous

basis and are considered as mandatory on a national basis.

- Assessment services – need for the Education Department to build up a strong psychological team together with other professionals in order to provide adequate assessment of students' needs.
- Media education – planned talk with Fr Joseph Borg . TV exposure – The possibility of having short slots on television in order to create more awareness regarding the National Council of Women was proposed.
- Transition from Primary to Secondary - Reaction to documents and papers issued: A whole meeting in December was dedicated in drawing up points in order to summarize reactions to the White Paper. These included diversification of the curriculum, the size of the schools, consultation with counselors, Personal and Social Development lessons, work experience for secondary school students, inclusive schools, training teachers for differentiated learning and learning support assistants. Work is to continue on these points.

Reactions to National Documents: Discussions were held and a full report submitted on the following:

- Reaction to boat people document – A number of issues were discussed and a full report drawn up. The Committee recommends that the NCW organizes a seminar on this issue, inviting people such as Dr. Kathryn Camilleri, Centru Hidma Soċjali, Immigrants themselves and volunteers working with the boat people
- Pre budget resolution – A number of recommendations were made and submitted to the Executive Committee. These included Parenting Skills, absenteeism, private tuition, the curriculum for Primary and Secondary Schools, teacher training, learning support assistants, literacy, teacher accountability and in-service training, students' grants and support services for teachers.

Ruth Falzon,
NCW Education Committee Co-ordinator

NCW Environment Committee Annual Report



Marie Demicoli

The members of the Environment Committee are Marie Demicoli (Co-ordinator), Therese Cassola (Convenor), CC representative Blanche Martin, Catherine Muscat, Helen Galea St. John, Vanna Bondin, Rose Marie Carbone, Monica Schranz, Adleen Bonello, Tessie Xuereb, Rita Spiteri Bailey, and Jeanette Farrugia.

The Committee focused on sustainable development activities aimed at nurturing more awareness in addressing climate change. The general objective was to make members and the general public aware of how natural and human systems are vulnerable to climate change and to create love and respect for nature: from the small indoor plant to the whole ecological system.

Activities held during 2008

The Spring Gozo Outing on Friday 18th April 2008

Visit to Qala, meeting with Mayor, tour of various places of interest, including the Church dedicated to St. Joseph and the local primary school where the headmistress explained the number of initiatives that the school has taken to create awareness amongst school children.

The Autumn Gozo Outing on 17th October 2008

The group experienced the making of Belgian chocolates at a small factory in Victoria. Mr. John Mizzi took the group on a walk to where Wied Ghasri flows into the sea between impressive cliffs. In spite of the inclement weather, the group enjoyed a memorable scenario, that of a storm approaching the island of Gozo.

ECO CAFÉ

The popular ECO CAFÉ event was held during April, May, September, October and November. Catherine Muscat shared her expertise on various gardening jobs such as the sowing of bulbs, the care of indoor plants, cuttings from plants and how to plant them, transplanting and also flower arrangements techniques. Helen Galea St. John spoke about the importance of herbs and how to grow herbs in pots and garden patches. All sessions were well attended and participants had hands-on experience of re-potting and also of flower arranging. During each session participants were invited for refreshments prepared by the committee members. Plants and flower arrangements were raffled or sold during the sessions. This activity proved to be very popular amongst members and the general public,

Talk on Climate Change

Stephanie Sciberras gave a presentation on the topical issue of Climate Change, the single largest environmental, social and economic challenge this century. Stephanie gave some tips to help reduce the effect of Climate Change.

Topic Discussed during committee meetings:

- Reform of Rent Laws
- Climate Change and the Lisbon Strategy
- Climate Change and the Mediterranean Region
- Palm Trees and the palm-killing bug Red Palm Weevil
- Elimination of toxic sprays to kill weeds that are harming the water table
- Reducing CO2 emissions and green house gases
- Energy Saving

Marie Demicoli,
NCW Environment Committee Coordinator

Commonwealth Consultation in Malta

Commonwealth Consultation/Conference in Malta



Hanan El Khatib, Malta Foreign Office, Prof Peter Xuereb, President Emeritus Guido de Marco, Grace Attard, President National Council of Women, Vijay Krishnarajan, Deputy Director Commonwealth Foundation and Doris Bingley, Commonwealth Foundation Civil Society Advisory Committee.

The Conference/ Consultation was organised by the National Council of Women on the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting theme "Partnership for a More Equitable and Sustainable Future", in preparation for the CHOGM 2009. The Commonwealth Foundation is committed to

enabling Commonwealth citizens to inform and influence: inform their communities; and influence their political leaders.

The following are recommendations resulting from the discussions

- Partnerships are essential for the way forward. Different models of partnerships - Civil Society and Governments; Global Institutions and Organised Civil Society; North and South; East and West. Policy for Partnerships to establish good governance, fair terms and sustainable transformation, as well as proper engagement and dialogue.
- Capacity building for civil society organisations; institutions and Government Departments.
- Strong structures are needed for the role of Civil Society acting at Global Level. Modern technology is able to bring global civil society together, resulting in a People's Assembly and intercultural dialogue.
- The Commonwealth is well placed to foster partnerships and cooperation to achieve a shared vision

- Demographic Change – this is resulting in fewer births in Europe which will have an effect on pensions and development aid. One also notes the migration of global workforce.
- The promotion and applicability of Intergenerational Solidarity at National, European and International Level including the Commonwealth is a priority. The above theme may be put into practice if and when the wealth generated through economic activity is fairly distributed between all citizens.
- Education is paramount for employment, climate change and the environment and a constructive element in approaching jobs with creativity and innovation. This is needed for the benefit of future generations
- With the current global crisis one recognises the economic, political, social and environmental dimensions that are affecting every corner of the Commonwealth in this interdependent time.
- Concerns for the Commonwealth citizens living in poverty and facing the extreme hardships of hunger and the disastrous effects of climate change especially rising sea levels.
- There is also great concern at the impacts of the global crisis on young people: specifically youth unemployment, disaffection and migration.
- There is a need to stabilise the financial and banking sector that helps industry to develop; There is need for means of assuring our citizens that their hard-earned savings will not vanish in the hands of those that are entrusted with their money; Priority is needed to support our productive and service industry - Governments must really involve the social partners and organized civil society at large in the decisions that have to be taken to set our countries on the new road to economic recovery where ethics, social responsibility and sustainability have to play an intrinsic part of our plan.
- Human Rights – Use and application of human rights in dialogue and debate; incorporation of human rights treaties into Maltese Law and establishment of an independent national human rights institution.

The 2009 Commonwealth People's Forum in Trinidad & Tobago

For over a decade the Commonwealth Foundation, in collaboration with government and civil society in the host country has organised the Commonwealth People's Forum immediately preceding the CHOGM.

The principal means of engagement between Commonwealth civil society and CHOGM, the CPF also provides opportunities for networking and interaction among a cross-section of civil society organisations (CSOs) in the host country and in the Commonwealth. In addition, the CPF showcases the work and contribution of these organisations to the fundamental principles and values of the Commonwealth, particularly cultural exchange, sustainable development, and good governance.

Crucially, the CPF provides a valued space for civil society to dialogue with government representatives and to feed the ideas, issues and concerns of Commonwealth citizens into the CHOGM process.

Past events have included the Commonwealth Centre, 1997, Edinburgh; Commonwealth People's Centre, 1999, Durban; Commonwealth People's Festival, 2001, Brisbane; and the Commonwealth People's Forum in 2003, 2005 and 2007 in Nigeria, Malta and Uganda respectively. Activities at each of the Forums have included a range of civil society meetings, exhibitions and cultural performances. A recent addition to the CPF is the

Commonwealth People's Space, launched in Kampala, Uganda, which was open to members of the general public and provided a platform to showcase culture from across the Commonwealth.

The 2009 Commonwealth People's Forum will be held in Trinidad and Tobago from November 22 - 26.

Many delegates from across the Commonwealth are expected to attend the CPF, which has the theme 'Partnering for a More Equitable and Sustainable Future.'

Eight assemblies will form the core of the CPF programme. Topics of discussion will cover: Human Rights; Financial Crisis & Economic Development; Environment & Climate Change; Gender; Health and HIV & AIDS; Peace & Conflict; Deepening Democracy and Governance; and Creativity & Innovation. Cross-cutting areas include: Youth, Media, Education, Disability, Gender and Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Make your voice heard at CHOGM by attending the 2009 Commonwealth

People's Forum.

Doris Bingley, NCW General Secretary, Commonwealth Foundation Advisor

**Doris Bingley, NCW General Secretary,
Commonwealth Foundation Advisor**



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MCESD Civil Society Committee Initiatives

As part of its ongoing initiatives over the last three years the MCESD Civil Society has been meeting regularly to discuss issues of national importance.

The Committee reiterates its call on government to take the necessary measures so that the MCESD law provides for an equal footing with the social partners (Employers and Trade Unions) through proper structures

Lately it has submitted a collective opinion on ICT and Energy Efficiency to the relevant authorities. Member organizations have also been working on a document on flexicurity (a resolution on which was approved at the AGM) in particular in the context of the recession. Recommendations have been sent to the MCESD and Ministries concerned

Tourism

The Parliamentary Secretary for Tourism Hon Mario De Marco had a meeting with the MCESD Civil Society Committee during which he presented an action plan aimed at addressing tourism in Malta.

The Chairman of MTA Mr spoke about the ongoing strategy update for tourism in Malta to reflect the changing needs of tourists

Consultation Meeting with Hon John Dalli

As part of its ongoing consultation meetings, the MCESD Civil Society representatives had a meeting with Hon John Dalli, Minister for Social Policy and Health. The aim of the meeting was to discuss the current socio-economic situation in Malta in the context of the recession and beyond.

A number of proposals were put forward for discussion during the meeting, including the financial crisis and Budget 2010 focusing on social policy, gender budgeting, pensions and the need to address transparency in entitlement to social benefits. The delegation stressed the importance of flexicurity and consensus by Social Partners within the MCESD as the best way forward

The members highlighted also the Civil Society's the importance of the contribution to national consultation and its future role within the reform of the MCESD. Other areas discussed were the European Year for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion (2010), European Year for Voluntary Work (2011). Documents, which the Committee has been working on were presented to the Minister.

The delegation was made up of Mario Borg, representing National Youth Council, Helen Borg Bonnici, representing National Council for the Elderly, Grace Attard and Doris Bingley, representing National Council of Women, Albert Tabone, representing National Association of Pensioners and Stefan Bountempo representing Consumers Association



Consultation Meeting with Hon. Minister for Social Policy and Health, John Dalli

Invitation to participate in the Permanent Parliamentary Social Affairs Committee

The meeting, held at the House of representatives specifically for the MCESD Civil Society Committee was to launch the consultation process on '**Il-Hidma lejn l-Inkluzzjoni Socjali tfisser hidma kontra l-faqar: It-Tfal l-aktar li jbatu**', the first report of the Committee for this legislature.

Representatives of MCESD Civil Society organisations included: Mario Borg, National Youth Council, Grace Attard and Doris Bingley, National Council of Women, Helen Borg Bonnici, National Council for the Elderly, Benny Rizzo, Malta Federation of Professional Associations, Joe Azzopardi, Association of Pensioners and Stefan Xuereb, Consumers' Association. Present for the meeting were representatives of members of Parliament from both sides of the House and representatives of Civil Society.

The presentation by President of the Committee Hon Edwin Vassallo was followed by a discussion and recommendations from the floor concerning issues regarding children, families and pensioners among others. The theme of poverty was expanded reflecting material and financial needs, in-work poverty, different family configurations, environmental values and the impact of the ever increasing risk of poverty resulting from the imbalance between social and economic development. NCW has sent its recommendations to Hon Edwin Vassallo.

The MCESD Civil Society reiterates its call on government to ensure that the revision of MCESD legislation provides for an equal footing of Civil of Society with the social partners (Employers and Trade Unions) through proper structures.

Meeting of MCESD Civil Society with Dr Gordon Cordina: The Maltese Economy (2009-2010): Some Pointers for Discussion Basis for MCESD Discussion to provide Feedback to Government regarding the Economy towards the Pre-Budget (2010) Consultations (24.07.09)

The following are highlights of the points raised during a very enlightening consultation meeting with Dr Cordina.

General Conclusions

- Concern was expressed over increasing poverty among the elderly.
- Pensionable income is not increasing to the same extent as the general level of income in the economy.
- In the National Reform Programme for Malta it was stated that pensioners have experienced an approximate 20% drop in income over the period of two to three years.
- The pension system in Malta is essentially focused on the male breadwinner.
- Moreover social security and pensions should be designed in a way that do not penalize those who do unpaid care work and home care.
- The importance of translating the concept of green jobs into actual jobs.
- Reference was made to the relevance of in-work poverty in the context of surging unemployment.

Inflation

- In terms of inflation, it was stated that a unit should be established to communicate prices to consumers and ensure greater transparency.
- The Committee stressed that COLA should be given to the more vulnerable sectors of society.
- It was further noted that some individuals lose their supplementary income allowance because of COLA. Therefore, income limits for social assistance in this respect should be adjusted.
- Revisions to COLA should also take into account in-work poverty as well as the composition of households in relation to the breadwinner.
- Emphasis was also made on making work pay and the importance of productivity linked to wage increases.
- The Committee emphasised the need for greater enforcement and commended efforts directed towards enforcement in the abuse of invalidity pensions.

Human Resources

- The extension of maternity leave to 18 weeks was also commended by the Committee as are financial incentives to increase the female participate rate. However it was emphasised

- that more family friendly measures need to be adopted.
- Family friendly measures include the extension of opening hours for schools. This however must be undertaken in conjunction with a campaign which emphasises the role and responsibility of parents.
- Moreover the extension of school opening hours must be part of a complete strategy which caters for the needs of children.
- The Committee also noted the need for further encouragement of part time employment which allows for flexibility.
- In addition, incentives to encourage the employment of older workers must be enhanced.
- Older workers working in the government sector are not encouraged to remain in employment.
- In terms of education, the Committee noted that the educational system needs to be reflective of industrial needs.
- Discussion on the effectiveness of stipends also ensued as well as the possibility of linking stipends to performance.
- It was further noted that stipends must be seen as an investment in youths.

Energy Efficiency

- The Committee referred to the need for education on energy efficiency particularly for households and businesses.
- Energy audits provided by ME are commended although they should also be applied to non-profit organisations.
- An exercise should also be conducted to provide an average estimate of energy consumption per household also depending on the size of the household.

Further to the discussion held with the Committee, NCW submitted a number of documents focused on the following areas

- Flexicurity and the Financial and Economic crises
- The relevance of in-work poverty in the context of surging unemployment
- Legal framework for temping agencies
- Incentives to reduce undeclared work
- Childcare services provision including incentives and training for regulated home-based child minding
- Single Parents and work
- An employability programme for early school leavers
- Pensions reform to ensure adequate pensions entitlement for entitled elderly persons equal to at least 60% of median wage
- Measures targeted for the elderly
- The importance of Flexicurity to small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs)
- Recommendations for integrating young people in society and working life

EESC NEWS

- As part of the initiatives of International Women's Day, the EU Commission organised a conference on Gender Equality in a Time of Change. The conference addressed a number of issues concerning women in decision-making and in employment, highlighting the important role of national governments, social partners and NGOs to implement measures to ensure that the financial crisis does not penalize women. (documents are available on request)
- EESC has issued an information booklet on 'What can the European Ombudsman do for you', which can be disseminated amongst interested members.
- EESC drafted a programme for Europe which was discussed with MEPs, Trade Union representatives and Employers representatives.
- 'Manifesto for a genuine European Civil dialogue' has been drafted on how to improve civil dialogue. The EP also adopted a resolution on 13/01/09 to improve civil dialogue on the perspectives for developing civil dialogue under the Treaty of Lisbon. Both were discussed with MEPs, European social partners and NGOs in a debate organised by the EESC
- EESC Plenary in May adopted an opinion on the Directive promoting the safety and health at work of pregnant workers and workers who have recently given birth or are breastfeeding.
- In June the EESC Plenary adopted an opinion on opinion on the Directive promoting the safety and health at work of pregnant workers and workers who have recently given birth or are breastfeeding in an activity of self employed.
- The Commission issued a memo on the 27/11/08 on the Directive on Equal Treatment for men and Women in

Employment, highlighting defaults of all member states including Malta.

- An exploratory opinion is currently being studied on links between gender equality, economic growth and employment rates
- The EESC is currently working on Poverty and Work, and the aspects concerning family, children and women. Grace Attard is a member of the study group

Review of Roadmap for Equality 2006-2010

The Commission has issued a report on the 27/02/09 on the Roadmap for Equality between women and men (2006-2100). In this interim review, the Commission stated that the previous targets have failed in most areas, although most new jobs in Europe have been taken up by women. The EESC has appointed Grace Attard on a study group made up of three members preparing a study and recommendations which will be the basis for a relaunch of the next Roadmap, following a Communication by the Commission

Labour Market Observatory (LMO)

The July Hearing of the LMO discussed gender equality from different perspectives. New Skills for New Jobs
Grace Attard has also been appointed on a study group on New Skills for New Jobs. The first meeting was held in July in parallel with a Hearing in the topic. The group will have its next meeting in September. An innovative approach to the topic is being discussed taking into consideration current education systems and links with enterprise, demographic changes and forecast of new jobs in technology and green jobs.
(docs are available on request)

ECICW ANNUAL REPORT - 2008

Presented and approved at ECICW General Assembly in Malta, April 2009

The European Centre of the International Council of Women, ECICW, was founded in Switzerland in 1961 and registered in Finland in 2002. Today it consists of National Councils in 22 European countries: Austria, Azerbaijan, Belgium, Denmark, France, FYROM (Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia), Germany, Great Britain, Greece, Hungary, Israel, Italy, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Monaco, The Netherlands, Russia, Spain, Switzerland, Turkey and Ukraine. Together they represent approximately 10 million women through their 850 member organisations.

Board Members (April 2007- 2009) President: Grace Wedekind (GB); Vice-Presidents: Eleni Adam Valassi (Greece); Doreen Micallef (Malta); Cosima Schenk (Switzerland.) General Secretary: Brigitte Le Gouis (France); Treasurer: Annelies Pierrot-Bults (Netherlands). The Board has met in connection with the General Assemblies.

Relations with other organisations:

- International Council of Women: ECICW represents the European regional network of the International Council of Women, and takes part in all activities of ICW
- Council of Europe: ECICW is an International NGO, with participatory status at the Council of Europe, and a member of the Conference of INGO's, with a seat on the Board Liaison Committee (2006-08).
- European Women's Lobby: ECICW is a member of the EWL, and holds an elected seat on the Board.
- United Nations: ECICW has consultative status with the United Nations through ICW.
- Fundamental Rights Platform of the Fundamental Rights Agency – ECICW was accepted as a provisional member 2008.

ECICW General Assemblies 2008: ECICW held two General Assemblies in spring and autumn 2008 to discuss strategies and exchange views on issues of concern to women in Europe. These were well attended by member countries. Representatives of National Councils which have not yet joined ICW have been welcomed as observers.

Spring General Assembly, United Kingdom, April 2008

Many members had been present at the March 2008 meeting of the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women in New York, and discussion focussed on work to bring women's concerns right to the heart of the UN and member Governments. Concern was expressed about both CSW agenda items - on the inadequacies of gender budgeting, and on the failure to involve women more fully in negotiations on peacemaking and negotiation in conflict situations. The effects of war on women had been explored in a CSW Parallel event organised by an ECICW member. It was noted that an ECICW statement on the need for negotiation among European countries before resort to armed conflict had been sent by the ECICW President to the President of the European Commission.

ECICW Working Groups continued their work on equality issues, climate change, intercultural dialogue and violence against children.

Spring Seminar – a Seminar on aspects of equality, arranged by the National Council of Women of Great Britain, examined the need for more women in decision-making and Parliamentary democracy. There were speakers from the British Government, members of Parliament from Britain and Europe, and input from member National Councils about the varied experiences in their countries.

Autumn General Assembly, Brussels, November 2008

Major topics discussed included Human Rights, with a presentation from the ICW representative at the Human Rights Council in Geneva, and a report on the UNESCO Conference in Paris (September 2008) to mark the 60th Anniversary of the Declaration on Human Rights. The International Day on Ageing and the needs of the elderly were considered with a presentation by the ICW Adviser on Ageing.

ECICW Annual Report – 2008

Autumn Seminar – a Seminar on the EU Policies in a Gender Perspective was arranged in Brussels by the Nederlandse Vrouwenraad, with European MEPs and members of the European Commission, together with a visit to the European Parliament. An afternoon session included an exchange of good practices for gender mainstreaming.

International representation

International Council of Women Cosima Schenk is a Vice-President of ICW.

Council of Europe. Brigitte Le Gouis and Cosima Schenk are the ECICW representative and Alternate in Strasbourg. Detailed reports are available. The CoE has also granted ECICW the right to submit Collective Complaints regarding unsatisfactory application of the European Social Charter (if a State member of the CoE has taken a ministerial or juridical decree which is contrary to the decree of the European Social Charter). ECICW representatives attend many meetings in Strasbourg.

European Women's Lobby. Grace Wedekind was re-elected to the Board of the EWL at the EWL General Assembly in Lyon in October 2008, with Annelies Pierrot-Bults appointed Alternate to replace Laura Finne-Elonen at the end of her term of office. ECICW has been represented at all three meetings of the EWL in Brussels, Ljubljana and Lyon during 2008. Doreen Micallef attended the EWL Board meeting in Ljubljana in May 2008 as an Observer for ECICW. ECICW has supported the work of the EWL towards gender equality in the European Parliament, and in all work to reduce discrimination against women. ECICW has also supported further work on the effects on women of war and civil unrest

RECON project (Reconstituting Democracy in Europe). Laura Finne-Elonen has continued to represent ECICW in work on this project. No seminars were held, but a number of books and papers on Justice, Democracy and Gender have been prepared.

Other International meetings 2008

- PARIS - UNESCO meeting in September 2008 on 60th Anniversary of the Declaration on Human Rights attended by Grace Wedekind, President of ECICW, and other European representatives of ICW.
- ATHENS - Centenary meeting of the Greek National Council of Women in October 2008 attended by Grace Wedekind, President ECICW, together with Anamah Tan, President of ICW
- STOCKHOLM – Forum on the Future of Democracy. Laura Finne-Elonen attended this regional CoE Consultation in October 2008.

Work of ECICW member National Councils

All member National Councils have continued work within their own countries on a wide range of issues of concern, including the challenge of gender equality, both within the international Agenda and in connection with particular subjects of concern to women within their own individual countries. They have co-operated in raising awareness within their own countries on topics selected by ECICW for joint action. Member National Councils have reported twice-yearly to ECICW General Assemblies.

Future challenges

ECICW continues its work to empower women and to promote their participation in decision-making at national and European levels; to support Human Rights and to eliminate all kinds of discrimination; and to encourage sustainable development and peace. A major challenge for the future is the urgent need to secure greater representation of women at higher levels of decision-making, and in Parliamentary Assemblies.

Grace Wedekind,
President ECICW-CECIF,
April 2009

Highlights of ECICW General Assemblies



ECICW/CECIF GENERAL ASSEMBLY - Malta 24 - 26 April 2009

PRESIDENT'S REPORT TO ECICW MEMBERS.

1. The Spring meeting of the European Centre of the International Council of Women was held in Malta at the end of April, on the kind invitation of the National Council of Women of Malta. Representatives from National Councils in Belgium, France, Great Britain, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Malta, Netherlands, Spain, Switzerland, and Turkey were present, together with observers from women's organisations in Romania and North Cyprus. Germany, though unable to be present on this occasion, was represented by a Proxy vote. Apologies and regrets were received from Eleonore Hauer-Rona (Austria), Brigitte Wenzke and Gertraude Kaempf (Germany), Judit Asbot-Thorma (Hungary), Aviva Kohlmann (Israel), Nicole Manzone (Monaco), Helena Baschun (Russia), Elisabetta Baretic-Kolar (Slovenian Observer) and Laura Finne-Elonen (former President of ECICW).

2. During a very full meeting we enjoyed a Seminar arranged by NCW Malta, elections were held for the Board of ECICW, a number of very important subjects of concern to women were discussed, and new ECICW Working Groups were set up. The ECICW Annual Report for 2008 was approved, and will now be submitted to the Board of ICW (Copy attached). Reports from National Councils have been circulated, and are full of valuable information about their projects and achievements. The next meeting will be held in South Africa – probably on 13th October 2009.

3. **Seminar** - The meeting opened with a Seminar on the subject of Maltese Women in the European Parliament. Six women



Participants during the seminar
"Maltese Women in the European Parliament"

candidates in the coming European elections in June 2009 presented their case for more women in European decision-making, and outlined their plans and policies.

No Maltese women had been elected in previous elections to the European Parliament, and it was hoped that some progress would result from the June elections. Other speakers included Grace Attard, President of NCW Malta, the Hon. Dr. Louis Galea, Speaker of the Maltese Parliament, Dr. Joanna Drake, Head of the European Commission in Malta, and a speaker from the European Parliament Information Office. The need to include the women's perspective in political decisions, and for more family-friendly policies, for action on women and poverty, and for inter-generational solidarity was emphasised.

4. **Working Groups/ Issues of Concern to Women** – It was agreed to finalise the reports from previous ECICW Working Groups on equality, intercultural dialogue, child abuse, and climate change. These reports would be agreed by the Board, and submitted by the

President to members of the European Parliament and Commission after the European elections. A brain-storming session was held on new issues of concern with a view to identifying the most pressing matters for joint European consideration and action at this time. This was a very stimulating and enjoyable part of the programme, with all members taking part. New Working Groups were then established on (a) the effects of the economic crisis on women, and

(b) the increase in the gender pay gap. Among subjects to be included in these groups were the family/work life balance, the well-being of children, developments on maternity and paternity leave, and new problems arising for women at a time of economic crisis.



ECICW Working Group

5. **Elections to the Board of ECICW** – All members of the Board were eligible for a second term of office, and all were re-elected for the period 2009 – 2011.

6. We are grateful to NCW Malta for arranging such a varied and enjoyable programme, which included a Gala Dinner in the presence of the wife of the Prime Minister, a reception at the NCW Malta headquarters, a tree-planting ceremony to commemorate their 45th anniversary, the 5th Anniversary of Malta's Accession to the EU and the Spring 2009 ECICW General Assembly, a tour of a historic city of Birgu, and a memorable concert. Members were very impressed by the wide range of activities and training courses for women



ECICW President Grace Wedekind with NCW President Grace Attard during ECICW delegation's visit to NCW Malta Centre

carried out by the National Council in Malta, whose offices now include a computer room and a beautifully fitted creche. We send congratulations and thanks to all concerned.

**Grace Wedekind,
President, ECICW**

Assembly - Malta 24 - 26 April 2009



MUESAC

MUESAC Core Group



NCW President Grace Attard

NCW President, Grace Attard has been appointed for one year on the MEUSAC Core Group, representing Civil Society organizations. Together with Benny Rizzo representing the Liberal Professions and Julian Zarb, representing the Tourism Sector, they are in the process of planning a communication system with Civil Society.

The Core Group meetings she has attended so far included a presentation by Commissioner Joe Borg on EU Common Maritime Policy and the Maltese situation (May); Commission communication on Common EU Policy on Employment: A Shared Commitment for Employment; Commission communication on Europe's Ageing population (June); the Swedish Presidency of the European Union Work Programme and a discussion with Maltese MEPs on the forthcoming EU parliamentary term

The July issue of MEUSAC News issue 14 published an article on 'Il-Process ta' Konsultazzjoni mas-Socjeta' Civili fuq Livell Ewropew' by Grace Attard

Participation in MUESAC Sectoral Committees:

NCW regularly attends the sectoral Committee meetings which include: Education Youth and Culture, (EYC), Education, Social Policy and Health (ESPH), Transport, Telecommunications and Energy (TTE) and Environment. NCW sends recommendations before the meeting, to be circulated to all stakeholders and government ministries involved for discussion. The President was very pleased to note that NCW's views, for example on maternity leave, were taken on board when drawing up the draft Maltese position paper. (documents available on request)

NCW Recommendation on Domestic Violence

Ongoing study of current legislation to strengthen areas where there are weaknesses and improving methods of collecting relevant data

1. **More emphasis on prevention and early intervention methods**
 - i. Interinstitutional and crossdepartmental programme
 - ii. National Action Plan
2. **Adequate and professional training in different sectors, including:**
 - i. Health Services: professionals in hospital emergency department, primary care in particular the general practitioner, pregnancy and childbirth services including gynaecologists, midwives, nurses etc
 - ii. The Police Force
 - iii. Professionals in Social Welfare Services
3. **Shortening time frames between (unnecessary length of time is a risk factor to victims)**
 - i. reporting to the Police, and
 - ii. different phases during Court proceedings (the need for stronger protective measures and sanctions)
 - iii. decision by Judge to continue court proceedings needs to be taken within a much shorter time frame (protection measures and sanctions)
4. **Strengthening assistance to victims and their family (aged and children) (Appogg and other services)**
5. **Follow up of victims in the workplace during this process and after.**
6. **Eviction of perpetrator measures must be strengthened and put in practice**
7. **Monitoring and law enforcement**
8. **Free legal aid where necessary proposal:** bringing together a team of legal advisors who will be state remunerated. This will also help to reduce the time during court proceedings
9. **The role of the Health Promotion Department**
10. **Education on domestic violence in schools at primary, secondary and tertiary level**
11. **Addressing the issue of increase of violence on TV/Internet**
12. **Addressing violence in relationships of teenagers/young couples**
13. **Media Campaigns to educate the public**
14. **Financial and technical resources to support NGOs working in this field**
15. **Collaboration and co-ordination of efforts by different NGOs for better use of resources and expertise**
16. **European Year to combat poverty and Social Exclusion 2010 should include initiatives to address the issue of domestic violence**
17. **Co-ordinating with National Commission for Domestic Violence and National Commission for the Promotion of Equality**

Grace Attard,
President, National Council of Women

NCW Recommendations on Maternity Protection

Proposal for a Directive of the European Parliament and of the Council amending Council Directive 92/85/EEC on the introduction of measures to encourage improvements in the safety and health at work of pregnant workers and workers who have recently given birth or are breastfeeding COM(2008) 637 final – 2008/0193 (COD)

Comments and Recommendations

NCW supports the Commission's proposal for a new directive to improve the protection offered to pregnant workers and workers who have recently given birth and/or are breastfeeding.

This initiative is an opportunity to strengthen legislation that not only enables women to recover adequately following confinement, but also encourages them to breastfeed. Health and Safety risks during pregnancy and breastfeeding are unacceptable and therefore women should be encouraged to make their pregnancy known as soon as they are aware of it so that any risk regarding health and safety can be assessed and eliminated. Special attention should be paid to risks to both women's and men's fertility, as well as for the embryo.

Mothers and infants with special needs or who find themselves in special circumstances, like premature, disabled or sick babies, multiple births or hospitalisation, as well as adoption and fostering, etc. should be given extra support. NCW agrees with the Commission that a minimum paid maternity leave of 18 weeks should be guaranteed to all pregnant employees. However, NCW believes that the Commission needs to consider the recommendation of the Social Platform - including the European Women's Lobby - as well as those given by the WHO and the UNICEF which are based on the benefit for children to be exclusively breastfed during their first six months of life, as a health prevention measure for both mother and child. It therefore recommends seeking for additional legal and practical solutions, which, in terms of space and time, can facilitate breastfeeding.

On the other hand, sick leave during pregnancy should not have any impact on the whole duration of maternity leave, but urges the Commission to precise which exact period before confinement is meant. NCW agrees with the suggestion that Member States should take the necessary measures to protect pregnant or breastfeeding workers, within the meaning of article 2 of the original directive, from consequences of unlawful dismissal.

NCW supports **the right of women to return to employment, to the same or an equivalent post retaining the same terms and conditions, and to benefit from any improvements in working conditions to which they would have been entitled during the period of their absence.** NCW strongly supports payment during maternity leave be equal to the previous salary, or, at least, equivalent to sick pay. This provision is not only a necessity, but also a way of recognising of the value of mothering.

NCW believes that the use of flexible working hours in conformity with the flexicurity common principles and lifecycle approach should be seen in the context of difficulties with the care needs of children under the age of two. Maternity leave as a means to protect pregnancy and maternity has to be clearly distinguished from parental leave. The proposed period of 18 weeks aims

primarily at enabling the recovery of women after giving birth and to ensure a minimum period of breastfeeding and bonding between the mother and the newborn child. The importance of parental leave as an opportunity for both parents to spend adequate time with their infants, should be highlighted, but parental leave should be complementary to maternity leave - not replacing it - and enabling fathers to benefit from this possibility as well.

The importance of a holistic and comprehensive approach to these matters, to see the whole picture and achieve economic and social progress is necessary. In this context, policy makers must consider different needs, competing values and conflicts of interest in the following issues:

- **demographic issues (including low birth rate and fast growing number of pensioners);**
- **labour market needs;**
- **education and life long learning;**
- **equal opportunities for men and women;**
- **reconciliation of working, family and private life;**
- **accessible, affordable and high quality child care;**
- **active citizenship;**
- **solidarity between generations;**
- **fight poverty and social exclusion;**
- **and the best interest of the child**

NCW believes that if the proposal aims to support reconciliation, maternity leave cannot be seen in isolation from the range of other existing instruments in the above mentioned areas. The role of the social partners as main actors in the labour market is crucial in this respect. **Civil society too has to take an active part** in the process, both in ensuring that Member States are implementing the directive and in supporting by all means the above mentioned comprehensive approach.

NCW therefore urges the European institutions and the Member States to consider the necessity to take an integrated approach to this legislative proposal, and to avoid narrowing its scope and implications.

Although financial incentives to encourage mothers to return to work may serve to increase women's participation in the labour market, measures that will ensure addressing the needs of the family in such sensitive and delicate circumstances are extremely important and will in fact, also serve the same purpose. NCW strongly believes that the proposed amendments are also in the interests of the child giving the minimum time for bonding with the mother and breastfeeding.

NCW would also like to stress the importance of the father's role in these circumstances, which so far has not been given the importance it deserves. The father plays a crucial role in the emotional and psychological development of the child, boy or girl and in later years. The impact as the child's first male figure it comes into contact with should also be acknowledged.

Finally **NCW urges all stakeholders to ensure that the shortcomings stated in the Commission's report for 2008 Equality between Men and Women (2009) for Malta be immediately addressed**

**Grace Attard,
NCW President**

NCW Courtesy call on H.E. Dr. George Abela, President of Malta



NCW President Grace Attard with H.E. Dr. George Abela, President of Malta

NCW President and members of the Executive Committee paid a courtesy call on H.E. Dr George Abela, President of Malta

Whilst congratulating the incoming President on his appointment, Grace Attard gave a general overview of the work NCW is carrying out in the field of gender

equality and other areas through the sub-committees on Health, Education, Environment, Social Issues, Youth and EU Affairs.

NCW 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. Referring to the Lisbon Treaty provisions regarding consultation with organized civil society, Grace Attard spoke about the importance of civil society in the national structured consultation process

A poster of The NCW Vote for Women MEPs Campaign in preparation for the EU Parliamentary elections in June was presented to H. E. During the meeting there was an interesting exchange of ideas with the members of the delegation

H.E. Dr George Abela thanked NCW for the work it has been carrying out all these years. He highlighted the importance of reaching out to the most vulnerable and to address their needs in more concrete ways. Referring to Malta's EU membership, the President acknowledged the role of NCW, dating back to the accession period, in promoting EU membership and the Council's ongoing work in this field. He also spoke about the importance of Civil Society as part of a democratic process in consultation foras. H. E. expressed his commitment to be a voice for all sectors of society in Malta

Meeting with Ms. Margaret Abela Spouse of the President

Spouse of President of Malta welcomes NCW delegation



NCW Executive Committee meets Mrs. Margaret Abela spouse of the President at San Anton Palace

NCW had a warm and cordial meeting with Mrs Margaret Abela, spouse of H.E. Dr George Abela, President of Malta. NCW President, Grace Attard led the delegation which included the Executive Committee members. Mrs Abela was very interested to know more about the

work of the Council although, she was aware of the role it plays in society. Grace Attard highlighted the development of the Council since its foundation in 1964, with particular reference to present initiatives in diverse fora both national and European. The members present gave a brief description of the work carried out in the different sub-committees: Health, Education, Environment, Youth, Social Affairs and EU Affairs.

The meeting was an excellent opportunity to explore ways of how the Council and the Presidency can work more closely together for the benefit of society, particularly in cultural and social events and the President extended an invitation to Mrs Abela to visit the Council's Centre at Blata l-Bajda

Malta Night in the Heart of Brussels

On 15 July, guests from 27 member states had a taste of Malta's culture at a Malta Night organised by the Maltese members of the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC). The event was organised in Brussels and was hosted in the EESC building.

Addressing the opening of the evening Ambassador Richard Cachia Caruana, Permanent Representative of Malta to the EU, spoke about the key role the EESC plays as being a bridge between the European

institutions and the social partners and civil society. The Permanent Representative of Malta to the European Union also praised the role of the Maltese delegates to the EESC saying:



The Maltese delegation Edwin Calleja for FOI, MEA and MHRA; Michael Parnis for GWU; Grace Attard, NCW & Civil Society, Commissioner Joe Borg, Ambassador Richard Cachia Caruana, Anna Maria Darmanin representing UHM and CMTU; and Sylvia Gauci for GRTU.

"Notwithstanding the fact that the Maltese team is made up of just five members, they have been

very active, sharing their ideas, knowledge and experience with their colleagues within this Committee and, through the committee's work, with the other bodies and Institutions of the European Union. One fact that highlights their work is that in the first seven months of

2009 alone, the Maltese Members of the EESC have already presented five opinions in Plenary. Proportionately, this makes them the second most active delegation in this important Committee."

The evening was also addressed by Commissioner Joe Borg who also spoke about the importance of the EESC, and by the Committees President Mario Sepi who commended the work of the Maltese Delegation. The guests had a taste of Maltese traditional food exquisitely prepared and generously sponsored by James Caterers. The Maltese Chefs flown over specifically for the occasion have ensured that the feast of fresh food would reflect the Maltese culinary culture. Guests were treated to a fresh taste of the latest 2008 vintage of the Maltese quality white, rosé and red wines Pjazzta Regina brand. The three sensational wines are hand-crafted by Malta's leading family winemaker Emmanuel Delicata from a variety of exciting grape varieties grown in pocket-sized Maltese vineyards. Furthermore the guests had to opportunity to quench their thirst with Maltese Cisk and Kinnie sponsored by Farsons. The evening was supported by the above-mentioned companies and also by Airmalta and Playmobil.

The four hundred fifty guests present at the event also enjoyed the work of the Maltese duo Sasha and Sam who sang for an hour original compositions of their repertoire and Maltese traditional background music. The evening was considered to be amongst the most enjoyed cultural evenings to have been held at the EESC.

The Maltese delegation to the EESC is made up of: Sylvia Gauci for GRTU; Edwin Calleja for FOI, MEA and MHRA; Anna Maria Darmanin, representing UHM and CMTU; Michael Parnis for GWU; and Grace Attard, representing NCW and Civil Society, varied interests groups.

**Grace Attard,
EESC member**

News from Sectional Committees

News from the NCW Environment Committee

Tree Planting



It was great satisfaction to see the project "Plant a tree campaign" launched by NCW Environment Committee materialize. NCW is grateful for the full cooperation of Mr. Patrick Pace from the Ministry for Rural Affairs and the Environment. Through his intervention we were allocated a site for the planting of 66 Myrtle shrubs and three Strawberry trees at San Anton Gardens. Commemorative Plaques were set up in the area and the path adjacent to the site was named Moghdija Kunsill Nazzjonali tan-Nisa. All trees carried a name tag. Members were given the opportunity of planting their own tree. Our foreign guests from ECICW were also delighted and happy to have a tree in the name of the European Centre of the International Council of Women (ECICW).

ECO CAFÉ

The ECO Café session held on Wednesday 29th April was another success. Mr. Joe Borg gave a very interesting talk on Organic Farming. He explained the benefits of Organic Extra Virgin Olive Oil, which is available in 250ml dark green bottles. These bottles help maintain the oil quality by protecting it from light. Mr. Borg insisted that all olive oil should be stored in a cool place away from sunlight.



Gozo Outing



The Gozo Outing was held on Saturday 16th May 2009. NCW members and friends visited the Gozo National Library where Librarian Mr. George Borg gave a very interesting and informative presentation. followed by a visit to the Gozo National Archive where Rev. Dr. Bezzina spoke about the different important documents that the building houses. He showed us various patterns of Gozo Lace at the time of Dun Guzepp Diacono and also a document recording price lists during the time of the Knights,

After a delicious lunch at the picturesque bay of Xlendi, we went to L-Ghadira ta' San Raflu to enjoy the view and watch the frogs in their natural habitat. Following an enjoyable visit to Marsalforn, we proceeded to Xaghra Local Council where Councillor Carmen Bajada explained the various activities the council has undertaken. Her main priorities, as a councillor are Education and Cultural and Environmental Heritage, to ensure that Xaghra is gaining its deserved importance on the World Map. Her initiatives include putting pressure for the restoration of heritage sites especially the Ramla Hamra and Ggantija Temples. Ms Bajada also has gender issues to heart. The group was also welcomed to Xaghra by NCW member Georgette Bajada.

Lejla Letterarja



A literary evening was held on Thursday 2nd July at the Gaia Foundation Ghajn Tuffieha.

A mixture of poetry, prose, music, Maltese food and fruit and an extraordinary view of the sun setting over the bay complemented the evening. The whole evening was enjoyable and the surroundings rendered an atmosphere recalling the Shakespearean play of Midsummer Night's Dream. The committee would like to thank George Cassola for presenting the programme, the Gaia Foundation for the venue and food, Imelda Serracino Inglott, Grace Attard, Doris Vella Camilleri, Sharon Pereira, George Cassola and Damien Ebejer for their poetry and prose contributions. The delightful music of the Gukulari Ensemble and Maltese Harp entertained us throughout the evening during the evening.

Marie Demicoli
NCW Environment Committee co-ordinator

Mother's Day Activity – 2009



The Social Issues Committee has once again organised an activity for disadvantaged mothers on the occasion of Mother's Day. This activity, was sponsored by MCAST hairdressing school and the Birzebbuga Girl Guides. In fact, MCAST students provided the hairdressing services (including the hair products), while the Birzebbuga Girl Guides who through an activity, they had raised some money, sponsored the mini van transport for some mothers. For this activity, women from Dar Merhba Bik shelter were invited for the treat, which they really liked and appreciated. To assure their safety, they were accompanied by Marlene Ebejer (committee member) who drove them from Dar Merhba Bik in Balzan to MCAST and back.

Maria Camilleri,
Coordinator NCW Social Issues Committee

OBITUARY RITA CAMILLERI



Rita was a very special lady. To her husband Frans - an adorable wife, to her children Alison and Owen a dedicated mother, to her grand children a very special nana, to her brother still his 'little sister'.

To us all at N.C.W. (National Council of Women), she was a special friend, secretary, organiser, photographer and always ready to help. She had many talents. She loved music and icons which she exhibited in her lovely home and shared with many people. She was always very smart.

Six years ago Rita faced the big C. She fought it with her indomitable spirit. It upset her to see how it disrupted her family. With all the ups and downs, she used to attend meetings whenever she could. We all loved her. Now she is to enjoy her well deserved rest after her 'exhilarating battle'. As she rests in the arms of the Lord, may she remember us all till we meet again.

To her family our condolences.

Mercedes Schembri Wismayer,
NCW Executive Committee member

In Memory of a loyal member and friend Cettina Mizzi

The sad news of the tragic death of Cettina Mizzi was announced on the media on Tuesday 9th June 2009. We were not sure and perhaps it was hard to believe that Cettina had gone to meet the Risen Lord. The obituary the next day confirmed the heartbreaking news. The previous day to the accident, she was participating during the Commonwealth Conference at The Palace Hotel Sliema. organised by NCW and the Commonwealth Foundation. Her last words to us was, "Keep me informed about the next activity as I am looking forward to the Lejla Letterarja" and she rushed home in time for her grand children to find her waiting for them on their return from school. We knew Cettina through the National Council of Women; she always had a word of praise for our organisation and enjoyed all our activities. Her radiant smile and sincerity will always be in our hearts. She was a role model, who loved her family and was always eager to help. Our deepest sympathy goes to her son and daughter and their family, whom she loved so much. Till we meet again Cettina. God give her eternal rest.



Marie Demicoli,
NCW Environment Committee Co-ordinator

Meetings with Commissioner Vladimir Spidla

The European Commissioner responsible for Employment, social affairs and equal opportunities, Mr Vladimir Spidla visited Malta between the 10th and 12th June 2009.

During his visit Commissioner Spidla hosted a private breakfast meeting with key civil society members for an informal exchange of views on matters relating to his profile. Doris Bingley represented NCW.



NCW President Grace Attard and Hon. General Secretary Doris Bingley during the launch of the Gender Equality Action Plan

The main discussion centred on the current financial and economic crisis which will require the quick adaptation of many European employees to changing conditions, the transfer of some of the workforce to areas where new jobs are being created and the rapid re-inclusion of unemployed and inactive persons into the labour market.

Malta needs to work in the area of gender and employment to improve the situation of equality between men and women at the place of work. This can be done through a number of initiatives and projects which Government Agencies and NGOs should promote. The present maternity leave issue and work-life balance were part of this discussion. Vice-President Doreen Micallef was also present for a dinner in Mdina hosted by Minister Dalli with Commissioner Spidla as guest of honour. It was another opportunity to discuss gender equality with different stakeholders



Head of the EU representation in Malta, Dr. Joanna Drake, Commissioner Vladimir Spidla, Hon. Minister John Dalli, Mr. Frans Borg, Perm Sec., ETC Chief Executive Officer Dr. Sue Vella

The Commissioner together with the Minister for Social Policy and Health was also present for the ETC launch of the Gender Equality Action Plan, which was followed by a consultation forum. Grace Attard and Doris Bingley put forward a number of recommendations, including the need to ensure that projects implemented will result in long-term practices. Professional career guidance should ensure that female students and young women are informed at the earliest levels of education on 'green' jobs as well as future jobs related to technology. NCW also pointed out that women should not bear the brunt of the financial crisis due to the high rate of women in part time and precarious work.

Ministry of Finance Consultation Meeting

The President was invited to the above meeting which was held for the business community. The meeting included a wide representation of social partners and NGOs, who addressed the need for adequately balanced short-to-long-term measures in Budget 2010 to ensure that the recession will not hit enterprise (in particular SMEs) and employees negatively.

During the brief interventions from the floor, Grace Attard highlighted the need to address in-work poverty; consensus to be reached on the adaptation of flexicurity measures by all social partners through the MCESD. She also urged the Minister to consider the economic value of the voluntary sector in budget proposals and to assist NGOs in capacity building;

Regarding gender equality, the President highlighted amongst others, the need to balance family-friendly measures with financial incentives and to study the economic impact of both.

Through the MCESD Civil Society Committee, NCW has prepared a number of documents on different aspects of Budget 2010 to be sent to MCESD and relevant ministers;

Anna Lindh Euro-Med Award for Dialogue 2009

Israeli-Palestinian Movement "Combatants for Peace" wins the Euro-Med Award for Dialogue 2009

"Combatants for Peace", a civil movement jointly established by Palestinian and Israeli individuals, has been officially announced as the Winner of the Anna Lindh Euro-Med Award for the Dialogue between Cultures 2009. The Award, which is bestowed and voted on by the members of the Anna Lindh Foundation's networks of civil society present in forty-three countries, recognizes this year the contribution of organizations and individuals in promoting a culture of peace and coexistence in the Euro-Mediterranean Region.

The second place of the Euro-Med Award for 2009 went to History in Action Project Team (Bosnia & Herzegovina, Croatia and Serbia), a group of 55 transnational and inter-ethnic team

of historians and history educators from Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia and Serbia who succeeded in overcoming ethnic, religious, linguistic divisions in order to elaborate a common history textbook for the region. The third place went to the Israeli Committee Against House Demolitions (Israel) and Israel Women's Network (Israel) and finally, the fourth place went to Parents Circle Families Forum (Israel and Palestine). The second place will be receiving a special mention and the others will get an honourable mention.

The official Bestowing Ceremony will be held in Stockholm, Sweden, on 21st of September 2009, which marks the International Day of Peace, with the presence of Mr. André Azoulay, President of the Anna Lindh Foundation and a Representative of the Swedish Government.

DIARY OF EVENTS APRIL 2009 TO JUNE 2009

April			
02 nd	MEUSAC Environment Sectoral Committee Meeting Doris Bingley and Grace Attard attended	20 th	National Conference '5 snin fl-Union Ewropea' organised by MEUSAC at the Corinthia San Gorg Grace Attard and Doris Bingley attended
03 rd	MEUSAC Education, Youth and Culture Sectoral Committee Meeting Grace Attard and Doris Bingley attended	21 st	World Islamic Society in collaboration with Malta UNESCO Youth Association a Seminar on 'Tolerance- A Multi Religious Perspective' at the Islamic Centre Paola
06 th	Passover Meal for NCW Members and Friends	22 nd	MEA Annual Conference, A Post Recession Scenario for Malta. Grace Attard attended.
08 th	Half-day of Recollection by Father Alex Scerri	26 th	EESC SOC Section Meeting
14 th	Doris Bingley attends the conference at EESC in Brussels - A Programme for Europe: Proposals of Civil Society Grace Attard attends EESC Conference on A Genuine European civil Dialogue	27 th	ESF - 72 Job Experience Schemes Project Seminar to commemorate the closure of the European Social Fund Project Marie Demicoli and Doris Bingley attended
16 th	Grace Attard attends EESC REX Meeting		MEUSAC Sectoral Committee Meeting - Information and Consultation on the European Year for combating Poverty and Social Exclusion 2010. Doris Bingley participated
17 th	NISCO Meeting - Digital Switchover, Jean Killick attended Executive Committee Meeting	28 th	Culture, Creation and Dialogue Culture as a vector for EU Structure- building Regional Forum by FTZ
22 nd	Honoris Causa bestowed on Ban Ki Moon, Doris Bingley attended MEUSAC Sectoral Committee Meeting on Employment Social Policy and Health Doris Bingley and Grace Attard participated Arrival of ECICW delegates for the Spring Assembly in Malta Grace Attard attends EESC Labour Market Ovservatory	29 th	The Council of the Liberal Professions of Europe and the Malta Federation of Professional Association Forum held a meeting to discuss "The Green Paper on the European Workforce for Health in Europe" Doris Bingley and Marie Demicoli attended.
24 th -26 th	ECICW Spring Assembly		Meeting of the MEUSAC Core Group with Commissioner Joe Borg on Common European Maritime policy. Grace Attard participated
24 th	NCW Seminar 'Maltese Women in the European Parliament'		FTZ Meeting on Immigration part of the Quin Project at KSU Common Room
25 th	Gala Dinner in honour of ECICW Members at the Malta Hilton	June	
26 th	Tree Planting at San Anton Gardens by NCW and ECICW Members Cultural Tour of Vittoriosa Concert at MCC	2 nd	Italian Ambassador invites NCW President for a Reception at MCC
28 th	MEUSAC Sectoral Committee Meeting on Justice and Home Affairs Doris Bingley participated Grace Attard participates in the EESC Study Group on Equality in the economy and employment First Partners' Meeting on the Heritage Project of Wood Restoration. Jean Killick and Doris Bingley attended	3 rd	Breakfast meeting 'Flimkien Ingibu Izjed Xoghol Ghalik' organised by PN
29 th	Grace Attard attends the Study groups on Immigration Policy	4 th	CEC European Managers Triennial Congress 2009 Brussels National Colloquium on the validation of Non Formal and Informal Learning
30 th	Transport, Telecommunication and Energy MEUSAC Sectoral Committee Meeting Doris Bingley attended. MEUSAC Core Group. Grace Attard appointed member representing Civil Society	6 th	MEP Elections
May		8 th	Commonwealth People's Forum Consultation "Partnering for a more Equitable and Sustainable Future" at the Palace Hotel Sliema organised by NCW
4 th	Grace Attard participates in EESC Group III Extraordinary Meeting Grace Attard participates in EESC study group on work and poverty	10 th	EESC Plenary Meeting
6 th	Grace Attard participates in EESC Study group on Protection of Children from Sex Tourism	11 th	Business Breakfast to meet EU Commissioner Spidla, Doris Bingley attended
7 th	The Executive Committee pays a courtesy call on the wife of the President of Malta, Mrs Margaret Abela at San Anton Palace.		Dinner in honour of EU Commissioner Spidla, Doreen Micallef attended
8 th	1st European SME Week - Reception at the Upper Barrakka attended Grace Attard		Launch of ETC Action Plan Grace Attard and Doris Bingley attended
11 th	The Executive Committee pays a courtesy call on the President of Malta Dr. George Abela at The Palace Valletta.	12 th	Civil Society MCESD Committee meets Hon. Mario Demarco at MCESD Premises Valletta
12 th	The Monitoring Committee for the European Funds met at the Intercontinental Hotel, Doris Bingley participated		Russian National Day Celebration Doris Bingley attended
13 th	EESC Plenary		Gender Equality Action Plan Forum in the presence of EU Commissioner Spidla and Minister John Dalli at ETC Conference Hall, Grace Attard and Doris Bingley attended
14 th	Ministry of Finance National Conference for the Business Community 'Negozju Zghir: Ideat kbar' at the Excelsior Hotel, Grace Attard participated 2009 Progress- call for proposals for Anti Discrimination and Diversity projects - Meeting at NCPE	13 th	Civil Society MCESD Committee meets His Grace the Archbishop of Malta
15 th	EDRC Conference - Malta and the European Union 2004 - 2009 at the Radisson Bay Point Resort St. Julians Grace Attard and Doris Bingley participated MEUSAC Coe Group Extraordinary meeting with the Head of Cabinet of the President of the European Commission Barroso, João Vale de Almeida. Grace Attard participated	15 th	Start of new Computer Courses at BCW Centre
16 th	Moviment Nisa Partit Nazzjonalista Konferenza, 'Mizuri favur il-Familji' Grace Attard attended Anna Lindh Malta Network Foundation Meeting Grace Attard attended	18 th	EESC Haring on Work and Poverty Executive Committee Meeting Doris Bingley in Brussels for meetings with Commission representatives on External relations
18 th -22 nd	Doris Bingley attends the Executive and Board meetings of the Commonwealth Foundation at Marlborough House London	22 nd	Civil Society MCESD Committee meets the Social Affairs Committee at the House of Representatives to discuss the Social Inclusion and Poverty document presented by Hon Edwin Vassallo
			BMV Music Committee Meeting
		24 th	MEUSAC Sectional Committee Meeting on Education Youth and Culture Doris Bingley and Grace Attard attended
		25 th	MEUSAC Sectoral Committee Meeting on Employment, Social Policy and Health, Doris Bingley participated
		26 th	Grace Attard participates in the MEUSAC Core Group meeting on Common Commitment for Employment and The Impact of an Ageing population Grace Attard and Doris Bingley meet Social Policy and Health Permanent Secretary, Mr. Frans Borg at Palazzo Ferreria Valletta

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

12th BICE MIZZI VASSALLO MUSIC COMPETITION 2009 PRESS RELEASE

The National Council of Women is pleased to announce the twelfth edition of the Bice Mizzi Vassallo music competition. The Competition is open to all pianists and string players residing in Malta who must not be older than 22 years on December 31, 2009

The first prize consists of a short summer course abroad, all expenses paid

The second prize consists of tickets for concerts organised by the Manoel Theatre Management Committee during the period October 2010/June 2011

The third prize consists of a set of books/compact discs. The winner is chosen by a number of experts. The decision of the judges is final.

All interested persons will be required to present a ten-minute programme consisting of works of their own choice together with the piece/s set down in the regulations.

For further information and application forms apply to the office of the National Council of Women, Mountbatten Street, Blata l-Bajda on Mondays and Wednesdays between 10.00 and 12.00 hours or NCW web-site <http://www.ncwmalta.com>

Application forms must reach the office of the National Council of Women by Friday 28th August 2009 at 12.00 noon.

IL-KURA TAS-SIDER: HAJJA WARA L-KANCER TAS-SIDER

NCW Health Committee will be organising a talk on Il-Kura tas-Sider: Hajja wara il-Kancer tas-Sider on 2nd October at NCW Centre, Blata l-Bajda at 6:30 p.m.

Speakers: Ms Antoinette Attard breast care nurse Mater Dei Hospital, Gertrude Abela and Doris Fenech survivors

PARENTAL SKILLS IN SEXUAL EDUCATION

The Youth Committee within the National Council of Women in conjunction with Cana Movement will be organising a series of informative and interactive sessions on the topic of 'Parental Skills in Sexual Education'.

The aim of these sessions is to raise awareness among parents on sexual health issues concerning their children. The sessions will cover sexual health themes which may arise at different ages, including sexual education, responsible parenthood, sexually transmitted infections, contraception and the HPV vaccine.

Dr. Anna Vella and Ms. Pauline Tufigno from Cana Movement will be facilitating these sessions. They will be drawing upon their extensive experience in the field of sexual education to provide guidance to parents on this important topic.

The sessions on **Parental Skills in Sexual Education** are scheduled for 16th, 23rd and 30th October 2009. More details will be circulated in due course and if you need further information, please contact NCW on 21 248881.

UNESCO PROJECT

The Challenges of Gender Equality in the Small States of Europe

The National Council of Women of Malta is organising the 4th Congress of the Associations of Women for the Small States of Europe. It is taking place at **The Palace Sliema from 24 to 27 September 2009.**

The participants will discuss the present financial crisis and its affect on women, exchange views on women's rights and gender equality, share good practices, advocate zero tolerance to domestic violence and discuss the importance of sustainable development and intercultural dialogue.

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