

N-Mara

Newsletter of the National Council of Women - Malta

Founded 1964



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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Front Cover Photos

Annual General Meeting 28th January 2023 at the Victoria Hotel in Sliema
Photos by Ryan Ellul

Office Hours

Monday to Friday
8.30am- 12.30pm

Membership Subscription Rates

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Affiliated Organisations	€20.00
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Members and affiliated organisations are requested to keep their subscription fees up to date.



Founded 1964

II-Mara

NEWSLETTER OF THE NATIONAL COUNCIL OF WOMEN - MALTA

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EDITORIAL

Dear NCW members,

I trust you had a lovely start to the year, and that you spent the festivities surrounded by family and friends.

I spent the festivities manoeuvring my way as a new mother since my son was born at the end of last year, right in time for Christmas. And just like that, my perspective on life around me has changed. My priorities have changed. And my sleeping patterns have definitely changed, as I adapt my whole life to the needs of my dear baby boy.

While I've always loved my parents, I have found a new sense of appreciation for all that they have done for me, especially since motherhood has given me a deeper insight into all of the energy and sacrifices that go into raising a child. I feel like I have a new understanding of a woman's physical and emotional strength to go through such a big event, which has me celebrating how truly amazing women are!

I have realised the importance of being surrounded by support and love to get you through the challenging days and sleepless nights of having a baby. So, if you have someone close to you who has recently had a child, I'll encourage you to help them in any way you can. Bring them a cooked meal, and offer to stay with their baby while they eat it. Tend to their baby while they shower or nap. Try and calm a quiet baby rather than giving them back at the first sign of fussiness. And encourage them to do something for themselves, such as following a course offered by NCW, and support them by tending to their child for a few hours while they do it.

Women's day will have a new meaning as I have a better appreciation of a woman's strength and ability. I look forward to celebrating with you all during this year's event.

In the meantime, I augur you an enjoyable read through this year's first newsletter.

Sincerely



Lara Gail Dougall
Editorial Board

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President's Message

Dear Ladies,

It is time for our first issue of Il-Mara for 2023 and we have the opportunity to reflect on everything we have experienced in the past year and prepare for the new achievements that the council will work on and lobby for, in the coming months.

The recent violent storm that hit the Mediterranean Region and the Maltese Islands at the beginning of February made us aware of the effects of climate change. During the first months of this year we saw floods and earthquakes in parts of the world, most probably triggered by climate change. The earthquake in Turkey and Syria was so violent that it killed thousands of people and made so many homeless.

The war in Ukraine is also in our thoughts especially the suffering of so many women and children. We also remember the many dispersed families.

The winter season and extreme weather conditions has brought along unimaginable hardship for people in Turkey, Syria and Ukraine. Our thoughts and prayers are with them and also with all those volunteers that went to their aid.

NCW Malta Annual General Meeting was held on Saturday, 28th January 2023. This year we were back to pre Pandemic times and the AGM was held at the Victoria Hotel. Members were happy that we were back to in-person meetings and it was well attended. I wish to say thank you to all the team members, who worked hard to organise this AGM and also to all those who participated and made this most important NCW yearly event a huge success. As in preceding years, the discussions and matters which were raised were of great benefit and everyone contributed and right now NCW is preparing to disseminate the approved resolutions.

I wish to thank our distinguished guests, Dr Roberta Metsola, and President Emeritus, Marie Louise Coleiro Preca, who delivered excellent speeches with food for thought which the council will add onto its agenda and continue working on these issues. Some of these points were top priorities of NCW agenda as they have been for decade after decade, however we still need to emphasise these issues.

We need more women in leadership positions to stimulate more dialogue, peace, gender equality, and opportunities for all. It is vital for gender equality today and for the future. More women are needed to participate in high positions, offering their point of view as equal team members in the decision-making process. NCW has been in the forefront in encouraging women to attain posts in decision-making positions, especially in the political sphere and in the public and private sectors.



NCW will continue to work hard on its agenda especially on issues of the greatest importance. The Council has always aimed to raise awareness and put pressure on every level, to ensure that laws and legislations are enforced, so that measures will be put in place to protect women and girls throughout their lifetime. We will not back down on this.

The next important event is International Women's Day (IWD) which is just around the corner on 8th March. Although we will celebrate what we have achieved throughout the decades, we must remember that there are a number of challenges still not yet tackled. This year's theme for IWD is "DigitALL: Innovation and Technology for Gender Equality". In the coming days and weeks, we will be hearing more about this theme, especially during the month of March during which several seminars, conferences and other activities will take place. In fact, late in March, NCW will be holding a conference entitled 'Women and Finance' in collaboration with the Malta Bankers Association. We hope that all our members and friends will attend these activities.

I strongly encourage all NCW members and friends to participate in our activities which we organise regularly. Your support provides us with the courage to continue working and make the difference that is needed to face current issues and challenges.

Doreen Borg Zammit
President

International Women's Day 2023

The National Council of Women together with its Affiliated Organisations are holding a celebration Mass to commemorate International Women's Day at St. Patrick's church in Sliema on Sunday 5th March 2023.

H.E. Mgr. Savio Hon Tai-Fai Apostolic Nuncio in Malta will celebrate Mass and Rev. Fr. Joe Cini SDB will concelebrate.

During the Mass we shall pray for past NCW members who tirelessly advocated for gender equality throughout their lives; for all victims of violence and for women and children in countries of conflict and national disasters.

Everyone is invited to join us.

The theme for International Women's Day, 8 March 2023 (IWD 2023) is, "**DigitALL: Innovation and technology for gender equality**". This theme is aligned with the priority theme for the upcoming 67th Session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW-67), "**Innovation and technological change, and education in the digital age for achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls**" and The theme for Commonwealth Day 2023 is 'Forging a sustainable and peaceful common future'.

Roberta Metsola's Special Address to NCW at the AGM 2023

Insellmilkom,

Nixtieq li ninsab fostkom biex flimkien niddiskutu u nahdmu fuq temi li qed jolqtu lilna lkoll fil-hajja ta' kuljum.

L-agenda tal-laqgħa generali tal-Kunsill Nazzjonali tan-Nisa hija mera tal-isfidi li n-nisa qed jiltaqgħu magħhom fis-socjeta'. Din il-laqgħa qed toffri opportunita' biex nirriflettu dwar l-istatus tan-nisa fis-socjeta' kif ukoll biex nahsbu dwar it-triq 'il quddiem. Biex naghmlu analizi, analizi kritika u mhux biex il-mara titpogga f'garzella.

Illum il-gurnata, grazzi għall-hidma li saret matul is-snin, kwazi kulhadd jaqbel li m'hemm xejn minn dak li jistgħu jagħmlu l-irgiel li ma jistax isir min-nisa. Minkejja dan, il-persentagg ta' nisa fi rwoli ta' tmexxija huwa ferm 'il bogħod milli jkun fl-istess livell tal-irgiel.

Din il-gimgha zort skola tal-bniet fi Blata l-Bajda u għidtilhom li l-possibilitajiet li għandhom quddiemhom m'għandhomx limitu. Li m'hemm xejn li għandu jzommhom lura milli jilgħu l-aspirazzjonijiet tagħhom. Izda biex dan isehh, ahna lkoll għandna r-responsabilita' li nahdmu biex infasslu l-kultura ta' għada u nbiddu il-mod kif tahseb is-socjeta'.

L-isfidi għan-nisa huma kbar, fid-diversi rwoli - bhala haddiema, professjonisti, self-employed jew sidien ta' negozji, genituri, u nisa mizzewga. Hawnhekk irrid insemmi l-pjaga tal-vjolenza domestika, li timmanifesta ruhha fis-swat, kliem malizzjuż, l-abbuż sesswali u psikologiku, u kif garrabna f'it gimghat ilu - qtil. Dan kollu la kien u lanqas hu accettabbli. Jehtieg inkunu kapaci nanticipaw u nagixxu, u mhux nirreagixxu. Jehtieg li l-kuxjenza la tirtab u lanqas tidra. Li nisimghu b'kazijiet diversi drabi ma jinnormalizzax

dak li hu hazin. Irridu saħansitra nilhqu l-vuci li mhux tinstema, imma li qed tbatu.

Din is-sena li għadna kif bdejna hija ddedikata għall-hiliet fi hdan l-Unjoni Ewropea. Il-qalba digitali u ambjentali se twassal biex jinfethu diversi opportunitajiet godda għan-nies u għall-ekonomija Ewropea. U għalhekk huwa importanti li aktar nies ikollhom il-hiliet mehtiega, biex hadd ma jaqa lura. Irridu nizguraw li dawn il-bidliet isiru b'mod gust u li jharsu lejn kull qasam tas-socjeta', biex kulhadd igawdi mill-opportunitajiet il-godda. Dan jghodd għal kulhadd. Bhalissa, minn kull sitt speċjalisti tal-IT, wahda biss hija mara. Terz biss ta' dawk li jahdmu fil-qasam tax-xjenza, tat-teknologija, tal-inginerija u tal-matematika huma nisa.

Qabel naghlaq nixtieq insellem lill-President Emeritu Marie Louise Coleiro Preca, it-tieni President mara fl-istorja ta' pajjizna, li ddedikat hajjitha għall-ugwaljanza, l-inkluzjoni soċjali u d-drittijiet tat-tfal.

Grazzi lill-President tal-Kunsill Doreen Borg Zammit u l-membri tal-Kunsill Nazzjonali tan-Nisa tal-hidma tagħkom u tal-opportunita' biex naqsam f'it hsibijiet magħkom. Se nkun qed nistenna l-konkluzjonijiet ta' din il-laqgħa biex ningħaqdu flimkien fil-hidma li rridu nwettqu



Hon. Dr Roberta Metsola
President of the European Parliament

Ambassadors' Visits to NCW Centre

National Council of Women President Doreen Borg Zammit and several members of the Executive Committee welcomed the Ambassador for Ireland H.E. Caroline Whelan and Ambassador for the Netherlands, H.E. Djoeko Adimi for separate visits to NCW centre in February.

Both Ambassadors were very pleased to hear about the varied and valid work that NCW is doing for the benefit of society.



Platform Against Homelessness: HomeInclusRation Project

Trapped between Violence and Homelessness: Highlighting Gender Specific Experiences

Homelessness is the state of being unhoused and unsheltered but also the condition of lacking stable, safe and adequate housing. It is a profound assault on dignity, belonging and life itself. Homelessness is a social plague that is irreconcilable with the European Union's objectives of a strong social Europe and social inclusion and reflects on us all. Homelessness not only indicates a failure to guarantee access to safe, affordable and adequate housing for all, but it also undermines the highest standard of health, disproportionately so for women.

Principle 19 of the European Pillar of Social Rights stresses that access to social housing or housing assistance of good quality shall be provided for those in need. The Policy response stipulates that EU Member States have primary responsibility and competence to address homelessness. The Platform Against Homelessness in Malta recognizes that high quality affordable housing is an anchor to every woman's life, yet we rarely speak about housing policy as a means to advance gender equity or provide an economic safety net for women.

The HomeInclusRation Project was launched as a means to strengthen the Platform and highlight challenges affecting homelessness, inclusion and migration as we work collaboratively to provide a more just society for everyone. As the Platform discussed inclusive services for women, intimate partner violence and limited financial and social resources were highlighted as a common path to homelessness for women.

Women are more likely to have experienced abuse and trauma both before or during homelessness. In a recent study published by YMCA entitled Contemporary Homelessness in Malta: Quantitative Research, domestic violence was cited as the leading cause of homelessness among females who participated in the study. 50.6% of the women cited domestic violence as the direct cause of them experiencing homelessness. Looking at the nationalities of those citing domestic violence as the leading cause of homelessness, the study found that the majority of the women were Maltese (49.5%) against 33.7% who were foreigners. Current or recent victims of domestic violence are at increased risk of experiencing homelessness. Abusers typically use violence as part of larger strategies to exercise power and control over their

partners and isolate their partners from support networks. As a result, a woman who has experienced domestic violence will often have little or no access to money and very few friends or family members to rely on if she flees a violent relationship. Housing instability and lack of safe and affordable housing options heighten the risks for women experiencing homelessness. A lack of affordable housing often lead women to stay in or return to violent relationships.

Unaddressed and gender specific needs should be linked to current housing interventions. Empowering women are one of the many ways we can support solutions to homelessness. It is about providing them with the tools they need to combat the experience and succeed in making the right choices to overcome it.

Gendered and trauma-informed approaches to policy and practice recommendations for women centered services are essential. We need gender informed approaches to combatting homelessness among women. A housing plan should provide the opportunity for communities and policymakers to widen the discussion, articulate new metrics, and develop a shared and inclusive vision of housing policy for Malta.

Dr. Patrizia M. Gozito BSc, MSc, PhD, ABCS
Head of Residential Department, YMCA Malta
Member, Executive Committee, National Council of Women
President, YWCA Malta



This project has been funded by the Small Initiatives Support Scheme (SIS) managed by the Malta Council for the Voluntary Sector (MCVS) supported by the Ministry for Inclusion, Voluntary Organisations and Consumer Rights (MIVC).



Europa Donna

EuropaDonna (Malta) is involved in maintaining support to all those who are going through some rough times owing to breast cancer. Survivors also feel the need for contact with others in order to encourage each other to fully live their lives during and after their traumatic experience. At the same time, the committee advocates for quality care and research for cure. Several events have taken place over the past year, including a beautiful social gathering organised on 12th February, beginning with Mass which was officiated by Bishop Joseph Galea Curmi at St Agatha's church Rabat. The priests missionaries of St Paul welcomed us, family and friends warmly while first Lady Mrs M Vella kindly attended. Many of us met for the first time in person after two years, only being introduced during our online monthly



meetings. We have regular events and meetings so we encourage members, family and friends to look into our website and join us in any upcoming events.

President Emeritus Her Excellency Marie Louise Coleiro Preca's speech at NCW AGM

Good morning,

I would like to thank the President of the National Council of Women, Ms Doreen Borg Zammit, and the Committee, for your kind invitation to address the Annual General Meeting of the National Council of Women. I feel honoured to be addressing the longest serving women's rights organisation on our islands. I have followed the National Council of Women since my childhood. Probably because of my family background being the eldest child in a family of 6 six children with 5 of us being girls. My father's strong belief in our competence as girls, made me look out for those people who believed in the competence and abilities of women.

I was brought up to believe that we as girls, are as competent as boys, and that there were no limits to what our abilities can reach. I was lucky to have lived through a childhood where gender equality was never an issue. I therefore would like to salute the founders of NCW and thank the former and present members of NCW for your unwavering hard work in creating awareness, in informing, in educating and in empowering Maltese Society, over these many years, about so many issues and rights that impacted and still impact on women's lives and their wellbeing.

I must note that the NCW has in the process of its nearly 60 years of existence, has been a strong voice for change and for the empowerment of so many women in our society. I therefore feel honoured today to be addressing for the very first time this Annual General Meeting of the National Council of Women. As a woman of this country, I would like to thank you for your activism to promote women's rights.

Indeed, I believe that we have come a long way since the acquisition of universal suffrage, seventy years ago, and the other subsequent important steps forward in addressing gender equality.

However, I am sure that we all agree, that there are still giant steps that we need to take to assert the enjoyment and safeguarding of all Women's Human Rights, to ensure a productive and respectful life, free from exploitation, discrimination, and violence for all women in our country. I would like therefore to highlight a few very important challenges that women are still facing in our country. We might be very comfortable to say that on paper through a multitude of legislation passed through our Parliament during these last decades, we as women have acquired most of our rights.

However, upon looking at some of the data available, we are immediately aware of the urgent need to ensure that gender equality needs much more than legislation to be effectively enjoyed by all. Together with the importance of the right legislation in place, there is also the need for a thorough culture change and mental leap in the way we manage the life of our society.

Let's take for example, **women in employment**.

If we look at Malta's employment rates, we see that, in the third quarter of 2022, female employment rates stood at 70.8% compared to male employment rate of 83.4 per cent.

This is a vast improvement from the figures for 2009 where female employment rate stood at under 40%. This is a great leap forward, however we know that there are issues related to gendered patterns of precarious employment.

A Study by the title of: **Gender Differences in Precarious Work Settings** uses human capital and gender stratification theory to answer three research questions concerning the gendered patterns of precarious employment, the effects of human capital investments and family obligations on precarious employment, and the extent that these investments and obligations affect precarious employment differently for men and women.

The study suggests:

- a) that women are more likely to work in low quality job settings;
- b) that gender discrepancies in benefits and union protection are explained by differences in men's and women's human capital, family investments, and other work-related situations; and,
- c) that gender differences in wages and part-time work status result from workplace discrimination towards women.

On the other hand, data from the World Bank also tells us that **women around the world are consistently paid less than men, earning on average only 60 to 75 per cent of men's wages, and therefore women are at increased risk of precarity.**

Precaire work is a sure way of compounding on the issue of the feminization of poverty.

I also personally perceive that the issue of the gender pay gap, also creates risks of precarity and undoubtedly creates a flagrant violation of the fundamental rights to equality and equity.

We very well know that **when more women work economies grow**, as has been clearly said by the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development, which also emphasis that: **An increase in female labour force participation, or a reduction in the gap between women's and men's labour force participation, results in faster economic growth.** According to the World Economic Forum, **it will take 136 years to bridge the overall gender gap and 268 years to bridge the economic gap¹.**

We therefore cannot sit on our laurels and feel comfortable that more and more women are in paid employment and stop there. Neither can we feel comfortable that more of our girls and young women are in education and reaching new heights in qualified professions and stop there.

We know that a subtle gendered perspective still exists, even with regards to the most qualified and warranted female professionals, and this is happening, even though our legislation precludes discrimination. We need to ensure that these issues of precarious work, and the gender pay gap, are addressed. These issues are even the more urgent when we know that a huge number of migrant women are now working in our country. Research shows, and it is also evidenced from known situations, that migrant women are at a higher risk of precarious work. We have to ensure that our work to address gender inequalities is centered around the needs of all women living in our country, whoever they might be or from wherever they come from.

Let me now give another example and I would like to highlight issues surrounding the scourge of **violence against women**. Legislative wise, we can say that, in Malta, we have most of the legal requirements on paper to make us feel free and safe, however, the patriarchal culture is still very real in our midst. Malta has been a forerunner in transposing the Istanbul Convention into our national legislation, however, domestic violence and femicide have continued to be the horrendous experience of so many women



¹ <https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2021/04/136-years-is-the-estimated-journey-time-to-gender-equality/>

living in our country. Undoubtedly, this reality does not make women in Malta free, secure, and equal.

We cannot be complacent, when indicators from the World Health Organisation also show us that 1 in 3 women, around the world, are at grave risk of physical and/or sexual violence. We must note that indicators evidently show that over half of all forced labourers, and nearly all victims of sex trafficking, are women and girls. Just this week we saw data published by the United Nations that stated that four Maltese girls were trafficked in the country for sexual exploitation between 2017 and 2020. I believe that the statistic could be higher if we consider all the women living in Malta, and if we also consider that some cases are not even reported, in particular where migrant girls and women are concerned. One very important step forward was taken last year, when our country acknowledged Femicide as a specific criminal act in our criminal code.

I recall, during my Presidency, addressing the Members of the European Parliament within the Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality, the FEMM, on the outcomes of a four-year COST Action, led by Maltese experts and academics together with a group of other experts and academics from across Europe about "Femicide in Europe".

The call of these group of experts was for the setting up of a European Observatory on Femicide.

Unfortunately the EU Commission did not embrace the call from these group of learned women, however I am proud to note that on the initiative of our very own Maltese expert Prof Marceline Naudi, and with the collaboration of the University of Malta, a European-wide observatory on Femicide, was set up in Malta.

Yet, the reality is that we are experiencing more and more incidence of femicide in our country, and with each and every one, of these horrendous crimes, Maltese society is shocked to the core, and women living in this country become and feel more and more unsafe.

We must not be complacent about this terrible situation. It is not enough that after each horrifying of these inhuman act, we get verbal declarations, and then our processes and systems continue to fail us, when they are supposed to be there to safeguard all women. How many vigils do we have to organize and attend, after each and every one of these terrible criminal acts, for the necessary actions to be taken? We must be bold and take all necessary effective steps to ensure that women and girls are protected, with the full force of our laws, policies, and the necessary resources in place.

We are all aware that such measures must form part of a larger transformation to prioritise the visibility of women, to empower our children in the recognition of gender equality as the necessary gateway to the effective enjoyment and safeguarding of Women's Human Rights.

Definitely, we cannot be complacent, when we know that one in 20 women have been the victims of rape, and 55% of women have been victims of sexual harassment. We cannot be silent, when we know about the devastating indicators which tell us that one in three women has experienced psychological abuse by a partner, and that one in three women has experienced physical and/or sexual violence, by an adult, during childhood.

We need to take action to bring our country closer to achieving the full potential of the United Nations Agenda 2030, and its Sustainable Development Goals, which provide a roadmap for the sustainable prosperity and wellbeing of all members of our human family. We are committed as a country to Agenda 2030, where SDG 5, explicitly calls for an end to all forms of violence and discrimination against women and girls, while also taking proactive measures to ensure equity and empowerment.

This is not a privilege bestowed to women, this is simply doing what is right, and putting human rights in action. We must tirelessly continue remind that women's rights are human rights.

No woman should live in fear for her life, simply because she is a woman. We must strive to create a country where all women and girls are safe, in the knowledge that we are all committed to ensure their full potential, and to nurture and sustain their wellbeing. We need to dig deeper into what needs to be done, to address this cultural plague. We need to have a national reflection, a thorough strategy, effective policies, an effective action plan and make all resources needed available.

We also need to work together, with all stakeholders, together with civil society organisations, and deliver effectively on our commitment in addressing gender-based violence for an equal, equitable and peaceful society.

I have also noticed that you have a very thorough agenda embracing many important aspects of a woman's life in today's society, aspects where there is much need for proper discussion, and necessary actions to be taken, to ensure that no woman in this country is left behind. I must commend you on the choice of such a rich array of relevant issues that are impacting on the basic rights of women in our country. I am pleased that you are so up to date on the realities that many women are facing today. I am impressed by your forthcoming discussion on digitalization, climate change, inclusion and sustainability. All these issues can impact in no small way to a situation where feminization of poverty is further accentuated, in our country and beyond.

I am truly pleased that NCW is a proactive organisation, and is continuing in bringing to the table such important discussions. Let me encourage you to bring your discussions on a national level too.

Your advocacy matters. We must ensure that all of us out there, are aware of the higher risks such challenges bring to women's rights. These are another set of issues which can impact on and violate women's human rights. It is so important that everyone is aware that the rightful enjoyment of Women's Rights is not a static process, but we need to be all the time on the alert of new challenges that arise, with all socio-economic progress.

I truly believe that our work for gender equality and equity does not have a start and end date, but it is work in progress.

Your continuous work and discussions today is evidence of an organisation that though it was born in another era, but it has regenerated itself over time and every time. This is also evidence of the relevance of the NCW that need to continue to grow to be, as it has been along the nearly 60 years of its existence, a strong voice for women in this country.

Yes, we have achieved a lot, but there is still a way to go, to be comfortable enough to say, that gender equality and equity is a way of life in our society.

There are many issues that are still hindering our girls and young women from their essential contribution to our communities and society. There are still real barriers that deny the rightful enjoyment and the necessary effective safeguards of all rights to women in our country.

We must advocate for more endeavours in educating and empowering our children in the respect and dignity that is rightfully deserved to all genders.

NWC has been a strong voice and must continue to be today, tomorrow and in the years to come.

My last call in my contribution today, is to the men living in our country, and to all of our authorities.

I would like to use Emma Watson' words, when she said that: ***It is time that we all see gender as a spectrum instead of two sets of opposing ideals.***

Finally, I augur you a successful Annual General Meeting and many, many years of activism towards the wellbeing of all women in our society.

H.E Marie Louise Coleiro Preca
President Emeritus

NATIONAL COUNCIL OF WOMEN



N'S ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING



Annual General Meeting 2023

On Saturday 28th January 2023 the National Council of Women held its Annual General Meeting at the Victoria Hotel in Sliema. The National Council of Women is proud to have received a video recording by Dr Roberta Metsola, President of the European Parliament where she addressed the General Assembly. She spoke about the importance of more women in decision making positions and the many challenges and obstacles that women find in various sectors, yet there is nothing that men can achieve and women cannot. We also had the pleasure to host Her Excellency President Emeritus Marie Louise Coleiro Preca, who delivered a speech highlighting women in precarious work, the gender pay gap, violence against women and emphasized that we need to bring our country closer to achieving the full potential of the UN Agenda 2030 and the Sustainable Development Goals.

NCW President thanked our distinguished guests and continued to speak about the work that NCW embarked on during the past year. She said that the council condemns any form of violence against women and girls. NCW will continue to work towards eliminating all forms of violence being physical or psychological, abuse at the work place and prostitution.

Furthermore the council continues to promote gender equality, encourage more companies to appoint more women on their boards and for women to seek more decision making positions.

NCW believes that encouraging young girls to study and seek a career in technology must start from a young age - instilling the love of this subject. For this reason NCW is very happy to inform its members that we have received funding for two STEM courses for Mothers and toddlers from the Small Initiatives Scheme supported by MCVS. These courses will be held during the summer 2023 in line with this year's UN IWD theme **DigitALL:**

Innovation and technology for gender equality.

The General Assembly also discussed and approved a number of resolutions which are as follows:

- 1) **Digital transition in the Euro-Mediterranean region.**
- 2) **Transforming Youth Skills for the Future.**
- 3) **Towards a Holistic Strategy on Sustainable Rural/Urban development in Malta.**
- 4) **Implementing the revised EU Gender Equality Strategy.**
- 5) **Advertising for modern, responsible consumption.**
- 6) **Early Detection of Domestic Violence & Further provisions to address violence against women.**
- 7) **National Breast Screening Centre – Extensive refurbishment of facilities and premises. (Europa Donna)**
- 8) **Inclusive Education – Moving Forward or Regressing? (Malta Dyslexia Association)**

The assembly also unanimously approved bestowing Honorary Life Membership on Dr Roberta Metsola for being the first Maltese woman as President of the European Parliament and her outstanding contribution to the Maltese society

The Executive Committee for the year 2023 are: President Doreen Borg Zammit, 1st Vice President Dr Rebecca Berry Wellman, Vice President Lara Gail Dougall, Vice President Diane Xuereb, Hon. General Secretary Grace Attard, Hon. Treasurer Iona Baldacchino, Asst. Hon Treasurer Therese Cassola, Asst. Hon General Secretary Marie Demicoli, Membership Secretary Gertrude Abela, Members: Sarah Scerri, Mary Buttigieg Said, Dr Josette Barbara Cardona, Dr Patrizia Gozito, Sue Domancich and Stephania Attard.

Marie Demicoli

Asst. Hon General Secretary

NCW Resolution AGM 2023

6a. Title of Resolution

Further provisions to address violence against women

Legislation

New and more rigorous legislation is required to deal with repeated punishable acts directed by men against women with whom they had a close relationship; this should also cover children and closely related persons. This new offence makes it possible for the court to increase the penal value of the above acts in situations where they are part of a process and which therefore make it possible to take the entire situation of the abused woman into account as it constitutes a violation of the woman's integrity.

A gender neutral language in the Penal Code is important especially in cases of assault and sexual crimes

Provisions on sexual harassment in working life

Women going through court procedures related to domestic violence need to find gainful employment to be able to overcome financial problems. Besides the need for training to go back to work, these women need protection at the workplace as they can easily become victims of another form of violence

Treatment methods for men

The new law makes it compulsory for perpetrators of violence to undergo treatment. Therefore there is the need to study existing methods of treatment for men and ascertain what methods are suitable and effective. Knowledge of the causes of

male violence should be taken into account when evaluating these methods.

Supportive work among men should be encouraged. Organisations run by men with the aim to further develop ways and means including information to men about violence against women could be given financial support by government.

Youth

It is especially important to reach out to youth on questions concerning violence against women. Gender Violence among youth is on the increase. Young people are vulnerable and through the education system, projects can be developed to create awareness and skill building among young people.

To include also in the current Act

Trafficking of Women for Sexual Exploitation or clear reference to any Maltese legislation in existence (reference to the UN Palermo Protocol)

Reference to The Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combatting violence against women and domestic violence (Istanbul 11.5.2011)

The Gender-Based Violence and Domestic Violence Act (currently under consultation) should clearly reflect and include in the text of the following Articles in the CoE Convention

Article 37 - Forced Marriage, Article 38 – Female Genital Mutilation, Article 39 Forced abortion and Sterilisation, Article 41 –Aiding, abetting and attempt.

MALTA DYSLEXIA ASSOCIATION

INCLUSIVE EDUCATION – MOVING FORWARD OR REGRESSING?

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

- a. The state is considering removing adapted examination papers. No clear reasons or justifications have been given
- b. The only recourse for parents in such situation would be to leave their children at home, reinforcing exclusion and perhaps also affecting motivation and wellbeing of the whole family
- c. Our national policy papers preach inclusion but students continue to be processed as appendices which need to be fitted into the system

The Current Situation

The aim of the Education Department is to move away from exams and to implement a more progressive approach by continuous assessment through learning outcomes during the scholastic year. Educators are using the easy way out to make students opt for alternative papers when this decision will affect the student in the sense that the student is opting out from the Benchmark exams. The markings at the final exam do not reflect the progress of the children, especially for children with special needs. One child may excel in an area while another may excel in another. To identify strong and weak areas of each student, a continuous assessment through the checklists approved by the National Literacy

Department has been implemented this year. These assessments will be carried out by the class teacher. Every year the student needs to be assessed in literacy to identify the areas and the program to be implemented to assist the child.

Regarding the exams, the final exam in Year 4, Year 5 and Year 6 will consist of 70% from the exam paper and 30% from the continuous assessment during the year. The final exam paper will be a graded paper, of which more information will be provided by the Education as to its structure. The parent can still opt to exempt the student from the final exam, however markings are still going to be obtained from the continuous assessment. As for the Benchmark exams, these will be held this year while next year these are being replaced by final exams as

explained above. The transfer from Year 6 to Year 7 will not be based on grades but on chosen subjects. The last class in Year 7 called CCP is being phased out as well in the coming years.

As regards to VET/SEC exams, these are going to be implemented in the same way, whereby the continuous assessment will have relevance in the final markings. The teaching methodology should be changed to incorporate dyslexic students. Teachers and LSEs should be trained to teach in a multisensory approach to address the needs of the student. Gozo should be monitored, and immediate action taken to address the present situation. Gozo should not be left stranded to fend for itself.

Communication from the Education Department is being distorted and even ignored when delivered to Head of Schools and Educators. A memo was sent out to schools in July 2022 about the adapted papers, however most of the educators were unaware of this decision. Moreover the main stakeholders, both parents and students were not informed of the discontinuation of the alternative papers. Educators and parents were not given reasons for such decision, therefore creating confusion among all. More awareness and information sessions should be given to educators to understand the methodology behind this reasoning.

It is being recommended that monthly meetings are to be held between Education Officials and MFOPD representatives. Feedback and complaints from parents are to be noted from each association and discussed during these monthly meetings, keeping in mind the best interest for the student. Recommendation/s

- a. Not to remove adapted examination papers
- b. To truly review the syllabi as children cannot enjoy learning with the massive amount of content that teachers have to cover
- c. National reflection of whether our education is truly inclusive

Malta Dyslexia Association

National Breast Screening Centre

Justification/s

National breast Centre Premises – Breast screening is an important health issue and promoted by Government and NGOs. Currently the premises located at Lascaris Wharf Valletta need extensive refurbishment, ideally re allocation. Various feedback was received from patients/doctors regarding the premises whereby it was brought to our attention that the current building has structural problems. Furthermore, there is also a foul smell and the dust from old walls can cause allergies especially to employees/doctors working there. The location is situated in a remote site (with parking problems) and hence is not considered to be safe especially when someone works there out of office hours.

We were also informed that they are currently working with two old machines which are far from ideal and hence doctors will have to carry on procedures at Mater Dei. It is required that the premises obtain new mammography equipment as soon as possible.

Recommendation/s

Refurbishment or ideally reallocation of premises. Health authorities to be made aware of this issue and to do something about it. We need to encourage Breast Screening as Breast cancers found by screening are generally at an early stage. Very early breast cancers are usually easier to treat, may need less treatment, and are more likely to be cured. Almost all women diagnosed with breast cancer at the earliest possible stage survive for at least 5 years after diagnosis and are likely to be cured.

If we would like to encourage more women to attend the breast screening program having a good facility will definitely be an encouragement.

Gertrude Abela
President EuropaDonna

Commonwealth Secretary-General launches landmark Year of Youth 2023

The Commonwealth Secretariat has officially launched the 2023 Year of Youth – a seminal 12 months devoted to the celebration and empowerment of the 1.5 billion under-30s living in the Commonwealth.

Youth-related issues like climate change, access to education, skills, employment, and political, social and economic participation, will take centre-stage throughout 2023, with Commonwealth Heads of Government committing to prioritise collaborative action.

Commonwealth young people will feature in a variety of high-profile events aimed at spotlighting the issues facing their well-being and prosperity.

Prince Edward, The Earl of Wessex, a long-time champion for young people, will act as the Quality Youth Leadership Ambassador throughout the **2023 Year of Youth**. In this role, His Royal Highness will support the inclusion of young people and shine a light on the valuable contribution they have made to member states. Further Youth Champions and

Ambassadors will be announced in due course.

The Commonwealth Year of the Youth initiative also marks the 50th anniversary for the world-renowned **Commonwealth Youth Programme (CYP)**. In August, the CYP will mark 50 years of working hand-in-hand with governments to support the education and personal development of millions of young people and giving thousands more the opportunity to sit beside world leaders and advocate for their peers.

The special designation for the Year of Youth comes from a mandate by **Commonwealth Heads of Government** who met in Kigali, Rwanda in June 2022. There, Heads declared 2023 be **focused on empowering young people, stakeholders and governments, to speed-up progress on youth-focused issues.**

Doris Bingley

Commonwealth Women's Network



COMMISSION on the STATUS OF WOMEN



The sixty-seventh session of the Commission on the Status of Women will take place from **6 to 17 March 2023** and will consider the priority theme of, ***“Innovation and technological change, and education in the digital age for achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls”***. The session will also review the agreed conclusions of the sixty-second session, ***“Challenges and opportunities in achieving gender equality and the empowerment of rural women and girls”***.

Representatives of Member States, UN entities, and ECOSOC-accredited non-governmental organizations (NGOs) from all regions of the world are invited to contribute to the session. NGO CSW/NY facilitates a platform for the voices and leadership of feminists and women's rights organizations globally to lobby for their inclusion in the UN deliberations in pursuit of gender equality.

One of the key components of the NGO CSW Forum is the Parallel Events. Each year, UN CSW invite civil society organizations (CSOs) around the globe to apply to host a Parallel Event, regardless of their ECOSOC status. These events are totally organized by the host organization and address the UN CSW priority and/or review theme in some way.

The NGO Committee on the Status of Women NY was founded after the First World Conference on Women in Mexico City in 1975. A primary objective then and now is to advocate with Member States and the United Nations for

the adoption of programs and policies that will advance the economic, political, legal, health and educational status of women worldwide and to promote women's rights and gender equality-cornerstones of the United Nations Charter.

Looking back, much progress has been made over the years through the determined efforts of non-governmental organizations in partnership with Member States and the United Nations. Yet, the implementation of the commitments made to women at world conferences, through treaty obligations, and at international gatherings is far from being fully achieved, particularly when these promises are laid out in national and local settings.

Good intentions must, as we know, be coupled with the political will and financial resources to effect real change in women's lives. Violence against women and other forms of discrimination against women, in public and private, work against the achievement of women's rights and gender equality goals. Many women do not even know their legal rights or how to employ established human rights mechanisms to strengthen their efforts. NGOs have a special role in acquiring and sharing skills that will support women worldwide to achieve their equal rights and provide better lives and opportunities for themselves and their families.

NCW Malta

In Special Consultative Status with the Economic and Social Council of the UN

National Council of Women

14th edition BMV music competition For piano and strings

Preliminary 9th September 2023
Final 16th September 2023

Deadline 30th JUNE 2023

RULES &
REGULATIONS

Website

www.ncwmalta.com

Facebook

[National Council of Women Malta - Home | Facebook](#)



Contact 21246982 or email
ncwmalta@camline.net.mt

BMV Competition Rules and Regulations

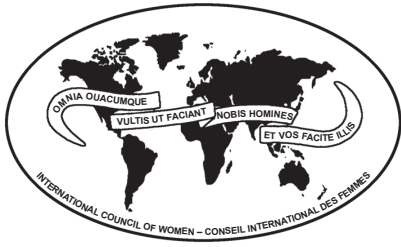
Application and Registration Fee

- Application forms and regulations may be collected from NCW Centre, Mountbatten Street, Blata l-Bajda on Mondays to Fridays from 0830am to 1230pm or downloaded from NCW website <http://www.ncwmalta.com>
- Applications must be submitted at the NCW Centre by noon, Friday 30th June 2023
- Applications received before June 2023 will benefit from a discount of €15.
- Application forms should also include:
 - i) Copy of the I.D. Card
 - ii) Music scores of both set and chosen piece/s for preliminary and final sessions

Registration Fee of €100 (Cheques payable: the National Council of Women). Office hours for receipt of applications: Monday to Friday 9am to noon. In case of any difficulty, applicants may telephone organizers on 21246982 or email ncwmalta@camline.net.mt

AWARDS

- Pianoforte section: Short music course in Poland with the collaboration of Chopin Society, Warsaw, and Professor Maria Gabryś-Heyke including flights & accommodation.
- String section: Short music course in Italy in collaboration with the Honorary Consulate for Malta in the Regione Emilia and Professor Mirco Besutti, including flights & accommodation
- Participants will also be invited to attend master classes given by leading musicians.



36th General Assembly Avignon

16-21 May, 2022

Social Protection for All women and Girls: Sustainable Development for the World

The 36th General Assembly of the International Council of Women was held in Avignon, France, from May 16th to 21st 2022 and organized under the leadership of Jungsook Kim, President of ICW-CIF and Marie-Claude Bertrand, President of NCW of France. The Opening Ceremony took place in Avignon City Hall on May 16th, with the participation of 150 guests from ICW affiliates

Brigitte Polonovski, President of ECICW, was charged with supervising the elections as the Returning Officer and Elisabeth Newman and Hean Bee Wee were the assistants. She presented the candidates for each position, monitored the voting process and announced the results. **Martine Marandel was elected new President of ICW to lead the International Council of Women for the next triennium** and Ludovina Moreira elected Treasurer and Chiou See Anderson Assistant Treasurer. Pushpa Hedger was elected 1st Vice President, Giwo Rubianto, Jamal Hermes, Fatma Inal and Nona Ricafort were elected Vice Presidents. New Board Members elected were Sirirat Tamrongterakul, Radhia Jerbi, Mazal Renford, Saida Zniber and Gloria Laraba Shoda. Recording Secretary Nebiye Isin Atala and Assistant Recording Secretary Doreen Borg Zammit. Ex-officio member Linda Liu.

In the evening there was a musical moment, the delegates went to the Conservatory of Music and attended a concert played by women composers and executed by women musicians. This memorable event was followed by a cocktail dinner party where all had an exciting opportunity to foster dialogue and a chance to get to know each other. On May 18th, Elisabeth Newman introduced the S/C Coordinators and Advisors who reported on the notable developments in their respective fields and thanked all who have been supportive of the SCs recognizing their importance in the functioning of ICW and all SC members of this last Triennium. Foundation Louise van Eeghen Lady Aberdeen Capital Fund (LELAF) Salome Bentick, President of Foundation Louise van Eeghen Lady Aberdeen Capital Fund, explained that the LELAF is an independent foundation founded by her grand-aunt after the WW2 and works on women rights and female leadership in the public domain through financial support for activities of the International Council of Women.

For the 3rd time, since its foundation in 1901, the National Council of Women of France has the honour to host the General Assembly of the International Council of Women, the 9th GA in 1934 by President Marguerite Pichon Landry and the 27th GA by President Paulette Laubie in 1994. On the occasion of this 36th GA in Avignon, Past President Paulette Laubie (1991-1998) offered to the Presidents of the National Councils and to the ICW officers a tray engraved for the occasion. This initiative was appreciated with great emotion by the General Assembly

Martine Marandel, newly elected ICW President, delivered a speech at the conclusion of the General Assembly underscoring that it has been a great pleasure to receive all ICW delegates in Avignon and added that we all appreciated Jungsook Kim who had to extend her presidency for some months to allow NCW France to wait for a drop in the pandemic to hold the GA in Avignon. Martine Marandel also expressed her thanks to Jungsook Kim for her kindness, generosity and hard work for the

goals of all women. Jungsook Kim said she applauded all her team for their efforts for the success of our GA and would continue to work for the great revival of ICW. The closing ceremony ended with the presentation of the New Board and Standing Committee Coordinators and Advisors. The old and the newly elected Board had a meeting in the afternoon. With much gratitude to immediate Past President Jungsook Kim and NCW France for gracious hospitality and fruitful meeting and heartily congratulations to the newly elected ICW President Martine Marandel on her important job for the advancement of women and progress of ICW-CIF.



The first ICW-CIF board meeting was held in Beirut on September 24-25, 2022

NCW President Doreen Borg Zammit represented NCW Malta in Lebanon.

It was a very interesting and intensive working meeting. In her introductory speech, President Martine Marandel emphasized the role of communication within our association and the need to create an internal communication network between our councils. In order to work together, we need to know each other better, share our resources and pool our work. Throughout their stay, members could count on Jamal's hospitality and the support and good mood of the women of the National Council of Lebanon. Discussions and visits helped the members to understand Lebanon and the difficult economic and structural situation under which the Lebanese are living. As far as the board members are concerned, these few days together have taught them to know each other better, which will allow them to work together in the future. Hosted by the Lebanese Council of Women the meeting was held by hybrid format, personally and virtually for those who couldn't attend.

Doris Bingley
Past ICW-CIF Vice-President
NCW Malta



Nutrition and Healthy Lifestyle Course

Monday 6th March 2023 at 9.30am-11.30am

National Council of Women Centre Blata I-Bajda

This year NCW in collaboration with the Nutrition and Dietetics Unit at Primary HealthCare, will be organising an 8-week course entitled 'Nutrition and Healthy Lifestyle Course'.

Topics which will be discussed include:

- The benefits of adopting a healthy lifestyle, both in terms of a healthy balanced diet and physical activity;
- Nutrition basics: Carbohydrates, Proteins and Fats and their role in the body;
- Setting SMART goals for behaviour change;
- Barriers to change and how to overcome them;
- Reading food labels and shopping;
- Meal preparation tips (cooking on a budget and minimising time in the kitchen);
- Easy meal preparation and demos.

The course will be held in a group-setting and the emphasis will **not** be the scales, or weight loss, but rather the learning and uptake of skills which will result in a healthier lifestyle. The uptake of a healthier lifestyle will in the end result in better weight management, improved blood markers such as better blood sugar control, lower blood pressure and lower cholesterol levels.

Sessions will be delivered by Registered Nutritionist Fleur Bugeja.

Sessions are free of charge. For booking and further information kindly phone on 21248881/21246982 or email: ncwmalta@camline.net.mt to reserve a place.

First come, first served as places are limited. Contact us now.



STEM Educator Wanted

National Council of Women are looking for a highly qualified and experienced educator to deliver STEM classes to young children and their guardians during the summer holidays. The ideal candidate will have a postgraduate level of education, previous experience teaching STEM to young children, strong communication skills, and a passion for making learning fun and interactive.

Responsibilities include:

- planning and delivering engaging STEM lessons,
- creating a safe, inclusive and stimulating learning environment,
- engaging with both children and their guardians to encourage participation and learning
- foster a love of STEM subjects.

Kindly submit your CV and cover letter to:

National Council of Women
Pope Pius XII Flats No 3, 4
Mountbatten Street
Blata I – Bajda HMR 1579

Email: ncwmalta@camline.net.mt Phone: 21248881 / 21246982



This project has been funded by the Small Initiatives Support Scheme (SIS) managed by the Malta Council for the Voluntary Sector (MCVS) supported by the Ministry for Inclusion, Voluntary Organisations and Consumer Rights (MIVC)



Women and Finance

A conference with the theme of fostering amongst the audience an enhanced appreciation of the benefits of financial literacy.

The event is free of charge.
Refreshments will be available during the break.

Date: Friday 24th March 2023

Time: 8:30am till 12:30pm

Location: Binja Laparelli at the Central Bank of Malta – Valletta
(Entrance through Tritons' Fountain Square)

Register by contacting NCW on:

☎ 21248881, 21246982, 99291936

or

✉ ncwmalta@camline.net.mt

or register with MBA on

☎ 21412210

or

✉ info@maltabankers.org

Register by latest Friday 17th March 2023

Organised by:

MBA | Malta Bankers' Association



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