



# National Council of Women

Affiliated to the International Council of Women

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## 1. Promoting Women's participation in the digital society *Making women more visible in the digital society*

**Submitted by Grace Attard NCW Vice-President**

### **Justification**

The Single Market and the development of the Digital Single Market is a key priority of the 2017 Maltese Presidency of the Council of the European Union. Access to the digital society in a comprehensive manner is one of the objectives for the whole of European Society.

The future of the European Union depends on research and innovation. Europe needs 1 million more researchers by 2020 to stay competitive in the world. Research could also create 3.7 million jobs and increase annual EU GDP by EUR 795 billion by 2025 if the target of investing 3% of EU GDP in R&D by 2020 is achieved.

### **Research and Innovation**

- Women's academic careers remain marked by strong vertical segregation: women constitute a higher proportion of university students (55%) and graduates (59%) than men, but men overtake women at the higher levels. Women hold only 44% of junior academic posts, 36% of tenured posts and 18% of professorships
- Promoting gender equality and equal opportunities for women and men is a commitment of the EU in all its policy areas, including research and innovation (R&I). Data available at European level show a striking imbalance between women and men in the European research sector.
- Gender balance is crucial for a well-functioning research system. To achieve their policy objectives for research, the Member States and the EU as a whole must use all the human capital at their disposal. Currently only 30% of the 7 million people working in ICT sector are women. Women are under-represented at all levels and above all at decision-making positions.
- Although a higher proportion of women than men complete higher education, they are still at a disadvantage compared to men when it comes to jobs, pay, working conditions and access to positions with more responsibility

### **Recommendations**

- The Horizon 2020 initiative must help to strengthen Europe's position in the technology field where business post a lower level of investment than their competitors in Asia and the uSA
- Government should aim to improve the legal and policy frameworks for gender equality in research, based on the recommendations set out in the ERA communication and the Horizon 2020 programme with particular focus on recruitment, retention and career progression of female researchers; address gender imbalances in decision-making processes and strengthen the gender dimension in research programs

- There is a need of change in policy as a result of the drop in the number of women ICT graduates: currently only 29 in every 1000 women holds a postgraduate degree in an ICT subject and only four in every 1000 will be employed directly in the sector

### **Women's participation in the digital society**

Women are still under-represented in SET including, science, engineering, technology and architecture and skilled roles to construction

Few women are working in SET and fewer still are in leadership positions The Equality Act 2010 makes requirements of employers and service providers to demonstrate their commitment to equality and comply with legislation regarding a range of inequalities

Malta Council for Science and Technology (MCST) is currently looking into the Gender Equality/Mainstreaming Priority (ERA Priority 4) under the ERA Roadmap. Malta is required to devise a national roadmap similar to the EU-wide roadmap

### **Recommendations**

- Public/national research institutions and the social partners, should explore ways of ensuring a work-life balance by developing and implementing family-friendly policies for both female and male researchers.
- Members States should support and strengthen the dialogue between research institutions, businesses and related social partners.
- European Structural Funds and other funding schemes should be available for institutional change initiatives, in accordance with the ERA communication.
- The evaluation, accreditation and funding of research institutions and organisations should be linked to their performance on gender equality
- Research increasingly shows that diversity is essential to building talented workforces it improves problem-solving and innovation and boosts business performance
- Expanding research to determine which factors are resulting in low participation of women in ICT in general and why few women choose studies in the fields of science, mathematics, and technology
- Adopting plans and strong measures with adequate funding that address the issue of gender inequality in these sectors
- Consider the situation of women and girls with disabilities when it comes to access to SET
- Identify career paths and models that can provide inspiration for women and girls
- Revising the status of the European Code of Best Practices for Women in ICT

### **Online representation**

Women in SET are often invisible or marginalized in the media, which consequently does not inspire young people looking for interesting careers or to strengthen the position of women who are already active in SET

### **Recommendations**

- There is the need for more dialogue with publishers and editors of scientific publications in order to remove gender bias from and increase female scientists' contributions to scientific publications, editorials, reviews and survey articles.
- Analyzing successful campaigns in social media education and employment
- Editorial decisions about website content are often the result of individual decisions and therefore diversity is often not addressed at all
- On sites where there is the opportunity to post comments, the content often reflects the gender bias of contributors, with women often being criticized for their appearance and lifestyle rather than for their successful managerial roles.
- Representing women across websites calls for examples of women actively engaged in SET work that might equally be performed by a man

- Using Facebook, Twitter and other new media to encourage women to actively communicate online and through blogs to raise the profile of women working in these fields

*Courtesy of UKrc*

*Advancing gender equality in science, engineering and technology*

*EESC SOC 502 Women in Science*



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## 2. Long-term care in ageing societies

*Submitted by Grace Attard NCW Vice-President*

### Justification

Labour market shortages in the healthcare sector are not being adequately addressed. There is an ongoing crisis<sup>1</sup>, and labour shortages will increase unless appropriate policy responses are pursued. In 2010, the European Commission warned that a supply shortage of two million healthcare workers would emerge by 2020 if urgent action was not taken to redress supply shortfalls of up to one million workers in Long-term care (LTC<sup>2</sup>)

Live-in care workers represent a numerically significant yet marginalised section of the LTC workforce. The exact number of live-in care workers is uncertain due to a lack of data; they are often overlooked in data collection systems. In the context of a poorly recognised and remunerated care workforce, live-in care workers have for too long remained invisible to policymakers.

Live-in care workers are present across all Member States. Many are migrants from third countries while others are European citizens working in their home countries or abroad. Some work irregularly as undocumented migrants and some are engaged in circular or temporary migration. Many work in precarious labour conditions including bogus self-employment.

As there is currently no occupational definition of 'live-in' care workers, their situation is equated to that of domestic workers<sup>3</sup>. According to the ILO, domestic work, including care work, accounts for between 5% and 9% of all employment in industrialised countries<sup>4</sup>.

Some Member States have moved forward with formalisation and inclusion of undocumented migrant care workers by signing ILO Convention No 189.

### Labour shortages, austerity, migration and live-in care workers

Homecare is rapidly expanding, influenced by a growing preference for care in the home, the prohibitive costs of residential care for many people and the lack of adequate investment in care sector infrastructure.

Despite growing awareness of the importance of the care sector for economic prosperity, the contribution of live-in care work to the European economy is unmeasured and should be addressed by Europe-wide research.

Many European women are trapped in the so-called "sandwich" position, expected to look after their parents as well as their children. They increasingly rely on paid care to do this work.

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<sup>1</sup> [UNI Europa UNICARE](#) (2016).

<sup>2</sup> [European Commission](#) (2013).

<sup>3</sup> Domestic work as defined by [Eurostat](#) includes the activities of households as employers of domestic staff, such as maids, cooks, waiters, valets, laundresses, gardeners, caretakers, governesses, babysitters, tutors, secretaries, etc.

<sup>4</sup> [International Labour Organisation](#) (2012).

## **Working conditions of live-in care workers**

The low status of live-in care workers is a product of gender assumptions that care work is low-skilled "women's work". It is also sustained by the structural marginalisation of migrant women. In various labour surveys, domestic workers are classed as low-skilled or unqualified. However, significant numbers of live-in care workers possess skills and qualifications resulting from years of experience or from unrecognised formal training and certification programmes. Live-in care workers are often required to demonstrate care experience and to have qualifications before they are hired, and yet their working conditions do not reflect these.

**Some** live-in care workers experience unregulated working arrangements and many work irregularly. They are often excluded from exercising their labour rights and face exploitation. Others work as bogus self-employed people. In many cases, labour and other state inspectorates, as well as trade unions, have no access to care-givers in their workplaces (i.e. private homes).

### **Recommendations**

- Measures for the regularisation and legalisation of live-in care workers must be supported to ensure legal pathways into the care sector. Such an approach is not without precedent: in Spain and Italy, some 500 000 undocumented domestic workers have been regularised since 2002<sup>5</sup>.
- Labour migration policies that enable third-country nationals to work regularly in the care sector, with equal treatment and the right to change employer, must be developed.
- There is a need for the introduction of a common occupational definition of "live-in" care work in Europe, recognised as a form of homecare provision aimed at recognising the existence of live-in carers in the European labour market and improving the quality of the LTC services they deliver
- The definition of live-in care work should cover working arrangements for workers (employed or self-employed) living in private residences where their work primarily involves provision of care services to older and disabled people.
- Live-in care workers, regardless of their employment or self-employment status, should be treated as part of the system of long-term care (LTC) provision.
- For the purpose of informing policymaking, Eurostat should gather adequate data on live-in care workers.
- live-in care workers should be treated in a similar way to other care workers. This means that they should enjoy similar protection, such as limits on working time (including stand-by) and protection against bogus self-employment.

### **Further recommendations**

That the European Union work closely with Member States to coordinate supply and mobility of live-in care workers as part of an approach to improve the overall capacity of the sector to deliver quality care. Specific measures should include:

- improving safeguards in the Employers' Sanctions Directive (2009/52/EC) to protect labour rights of undocumented workers in order to tackle irregular employment.
- The Victims' Rights Directive (2012/29/EU) must be rigorously applied to provide effective support for live-in care workers who are victims of exploitation, regardless of their migration status;
- bringing all relevant EU directives into line with International Labour Organisation (ILO) Convention No 189 providing rights for domestic workers;
- including the rights of live-in carers and their care recipients in future revisions or proposals of European and Member States' legislation;
- prioritising the reform of live-in care arrangements in the European Platform Against Undeclared Work, an initiative welcomed by the EESC;

- bringing care workers' rights into the European Semester and including them in "New start for work-life balance" consultations;
- initiating a Europe-wide information campaign on the rights of live-in care workers addressed to care users and providers;
- promoting and supporting the establishment of organisations and cooperatives of live-in care workers;
- implementing processes for recognition, harmonisation and transferability of qualifications and experience acquired by live-in care workers, using instruments for the recognition of qualifications, including those newly introduced by the Agenda for new skills and jobs<sup>6</sup>;
- redirecting European funds to finance training courses for current and potential live-in care workers in order to improve the quality of care;
- monitoring and improving posting of live-in carers by implementing the principle of equal pay for equal work.

***Source: EESC Opinion SOC 508 Developing services to the family***



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## 3. The challenges of changing employment relations

Submitted by Grace Attard NCW Vice-President

### Justification and state of play

- Rapid development of technologies, combined with other economic and societal developments have seen an increase in new forms of work and employment relationships that are transforming and creating an ever more complex labour market landscape.
- Innovation and creativity are important in driving a sustainable and competitive social market economy. It is vital to achieve a balance between promoting the economic and social benefits of these new developments ensuring necessary safeguards for workers, consumers and businesses, whilst avoiding their abuse as a means of circumventing fair labour practices.
- New forms of employment have the potential to create job opportunities, enable labour markets to function more smoothly, offering increased flexibility for both workers and employers, adding to the autonomy of workers and adaptability of work places, promoting skills development and offering increased scope to develop a positive work/life balance.
- European economies have seen increases in a range of employment practices that on one hand challenge the traditional norm of a full-time permanent job with defined working hours, agreed rights and benefits and full inclusion in national social protection systems. New employment relationships include "zero hours", "on-call" or "fly-time only" contracts, "mini-jobs", "portfolio work", voucher based work, civil law contracts, and job sharing arrangements. This is accompanied by a range of contractual forms whereby work is organised through intermediaries including "umbrella companies", "self-employment agencies", "co-employment agencies" or online "crowd sourcing" platforms. In many of these forms, workers are referred to as independent contractors, "associates", "taskers", "partners" or other terminology that sometimes obscures their employment status
- Research<sup>7</sup> has shown that digitalisation is polarising employment between the highly skilled well paid and low skilled low paid, and that it is the middle income moderate skilled bracket of workers in banking, insurance, administration who are the victims in an increasingly unequal labour market
- Digitalisation has also transformed consumer relations, leading to easy access to goods and services. Consumer satisfaction is high, but there are concerns about the impact of this on the economy and improvements are needed with regards to effective mechanisms for redress.
- Recent reports from Eurofound<sup>8</sup> and ILO<sup>9</sup> have helped identify the shift from traditional employment relationships to more non-standard forms of employment over the past decade. The ILO states that "The ongoing transformation in the employment relationship is having important

<sup>7</sup> [http://www.liberation.fr/debats/2015/09/03/daniel-cohen-il-faut-une-societe-dans-laquelle-perdre-son-emploi-devienne-un-non-evenement\\_1375142](http://www.liberation.fr/debats/2015/09/03/daniel-cohen-il-faut-une-societe-dans-laquelle-perdre-son-emploi-devienne-un-non-evenement_1375142).

<sup>8</sup> Eurofound, "New forms of employment".  
Eurofound, "Harnessing the crowd - A new form of employment".

<sup>9</sup> ILO, "The changing nature of jobs – World Employment and Social Outlook 2015".  
ILO, "Regulating the employment relationship in Europe: A guide to Recommendation" – Employment Relationship Recommendation 20016 (n° 198).

economic and social repercussions. It contributes to the growing divergence between labour incomes and productivity”

### **Recommendation**

- It is important to promote quality employment, social dialogue and collective bargaining structures wherever possible and address any lack of clarity about the rights and obligations of employers and workers; the employment status of workers; liability for accidents, insurance and professional responsibility; and the applicability of tax, social protections and other regulations
- In line with ILO, there is the need to underline the importance for governments, EU institutions and the social partners to identify and define the new employment forms, develop and adapt policy and legislation to manage the change and ensure positive outcomes guaranteeing a favourable policy and regulatory environment to safeguard the interests of enterprises and working people in all forms of employment.
- It is important to promote quality employment, social dialogue and collective bargaining structures wherever possible and address any lack of clarity about the rights and obligations of employers and workers; the employment status of workers; liability for accidents, insurance and professional responsibility; and the applicability of tax, social protections and other regulations

### **Digitalisation**

- Further examination is required into whether, and to what extent, employees' private and family lives require additional protection in a time of ubiquitous digital and mobile communication, and which measures, whether at national or EU level, are appropriate to limit this universal availability/reachability<sup>10</sup>.
- Digitalisation has also transformed consumer relations, leading to easy access to goods and services. Consumer satisfaction is high, but there are concerns about the impact of this on the economy and improvements are needed with regards to effective mechanisms for redress
- The diffusion of ICT skills and familiarity with standard software and global languages create opportunities for European citizens to work for global clients regardless of location, but also poses threats of unequal competition for businesses and workers, in that they must compete with counterparts from low-wage economies for these jobs who may not be adhering to the core ILO labour standards and guaranteeing decent work.

### **Skills development**

- Technological change can enhance skills development, but may also have the potential to deskill workers in traditional occupations. The impact of these developments on skills should be considered as well as an assessment of what provisions for life-long training, re-skilling and up-skilling are required and available to workers under these new relationships.
- Businesses working together with trade unions, CEDEFOP and levels of government must ensure that skills are developed to match the demands of the changing world of work. Effective use of EU Social Fund and other resources in meeting these challenges is vital.
- Ensuring people have the skills required to progress in quality jobs in the face of changing labour markets is a key challenge, and must be a central focus of the future EU skills agenda.
- Assessing how best to adapt skills, and scaling up digital skills for all must be a priority for the EU institutions and public authorities with the active involvement of the social partners at all levels.

### **Statistics**

- Reliable statistics on these developments are lacking. There is a need for data on the extent of crowd employment, the characteristics of crowd workers, the varieties of self-employment, economically dependent self-employment, bogus self-employment and precarious employment; the size of the "platform economy", the sectors in which it operates and its geographical distribution, comparing the EU's position in the global context.



- Statistics are also needed that enable the impact of new forms of employment relationship on the labour market, polarisation of work, income and economy to be monitored and to inform EU employment policy, including the EU Semester and the 2020 Strategy.

### **Legal Status of Labour Market Intermediaries**

- New forms of employment are developing so rapidly that contractual relationships cannot keep pace, which is why we need to look at their legal status. Clarification of the status of labour market intermediaries and online platforms is urgently required to enable them to be identified in the official statistics, to track their growth and establish which standards, obligations, liabilities and rules of operation should apply and which regulatory bodies should be responsible for inspection and enforcement.
- Differences in the terms and definitions of *worker*, *employee*, *self-employed* and *intern* need to be clarified. There is also the for investigation into the employment status of ‘crowd workers’ and other new forms of employment relationships, taking into account their ability to negotiate terms, the form of payment (and who determines it) and the ownership of intellectual property produced.
- The investigation should aim to give guidance for Member States to clarify, according to their national practices, the tax, social insurance and employment status of workers and the obligations of these platforms in relation to working hours, pay, holidays, pensions, maternity rights, employer-paid health insurance and other employment rights. The development of partnerships with trade unions, consumer or other representative associations could be helpful in addressing public concerns and seeking redress.

### **Health and safety**

Off-site employment could entail health and safety risks to workers, their clients and the general public. Work may be done in public spaces or private homes, using dangerous materials and equipment, without adequate instruction or protective clothing. Responsibility for insurance, certification and professional liability could be unclear. Online workers may carry out intensive screen work in unsuitable environments using furniture and equipment that does not meet ergonomic standards.

Research<sup>11</sup> has shown that digitalisation is polarising employment between the highly skilled well paid and low skilled low paid, and that it is the middle income moderate skilled bracket of workers in banking, insurance, administration who are the victims in an increasingly unequal labour market.

### **Social Protection**

As labour markets become more fluid, with a growing proportion of workers not knowing in advance when or where they will work, there are growing incompatibilities with national social protection systems which are based on the assumption that clear distinctions can be drawn between the statuses of being "employed" and "unemployed". Such incompatibilities benefit neither businesses nor workers. Research is required into developing social welfare models adapted to cover more flexible labour markets and ensure a sustainable and adequate income to guarantee a decent existence. This should be given consideration in the development of the EU Pillar of Social Rights.



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## 4. Addressing precarious work

Submitted by Kendrick Bondin GWU

### Justification

One of the General Workers Union's aims is to ensure that precarious work is eradicated. Precarious work institutionalizes unequal treatment and corrodes effective access to rights at work. Precariousness is not only affecting the workers but also the future of young people in the labour market, since precariousness is creating uncertainty among them.

Precariousness is one of the main problems in Malta, although some steps have been taken to address this situation. (This was discussed during a seminar held on the 20th October 2016 on how Precarious Work may lead to Poverty, in which NCW had participated and raised issues on how women are being negatively affected by this practice).

The GWU-Equal Opportunities Committee would like to forward its proposals which are in line with GWU's Budget Proposals for 2017:

### Issues to be addressed

#### **Discrimination on Subcontractor workers**

Subcontractors' workers are often paid less than their colleagues who work directly with the employer of the enterprise. This is a type of discriminatory precarious work, because social security contributions will one day impact employees' pensions entitlement.

Currently workers' social security contributions are only paid for hours worked under their main contractor, but not for those worked under subcontractors. Government and Social partners need to find solutions to eliminate this discrepancy

#### **Equal treatment of temporary workers and those employed directly at their workplace.**

Many employers use temporary workers to save on costs. Temporary workers, of which the majority are women, should enjoy the same working conditions as other employees doing the same job in the same workplace.

More and more women are entering the labour market and returning to work after years of staying at home. Unfortunately, very often they are employed with subcontractors and therefore do not benefit from the same benefits as other full-time employees who are directly employed with the enterprise.

Furthermore many are being employed on part-time basis and some cannot work on shift basis because they do not find accessible childcare facilities at night.

### Recommendations

- The GWU calls for an investigation into the contractual status of temporary workers and other new forms of work and employment relationships including subcontractual workers taking into account the ability of such workers to negotiate or determine pay, hours and conditions, holidays, pensions, maternity rights, employer-paid health insurance and other employment rights.
- Guidelines are also necessary to clarify possible grey zones linked to employment status in relation to taxation and social insurance.

**Developing and professionalising domestic work** is of strategic importance to achieving equality at work, because it is mainly women who carry out such work and who need childcare services, care for the elderly and home-cleaning in order to reach an equal footing with men in their career. These services benefit not only individuals, but also society as a whole. They create new jobs, meet the needs of an ageing society and help people reconcile their private and professional lives. They improve quality of life and social inclusion and make it easier for the elderly to remain in their own homes.

### **Recommendations**

- **Unions, employers' organisations and direct employment of employees by families**, as well as **works councils**, need to take the necessary measures to promote professional equality, for services which create jobs and negotiate a financial contribution from businesses in order to promote a better work-life balance for all and to:
  - promote the image of services to the family and upgrade jobs in this field
  - promote training for those involved and certification of the skills acquired
  - work towards setting up structures to bring services to the family together and organise them, while respecting traditions and differences between countries
  - organise domestic worker and employer representation

**At national level, social partners** need to collaborate with government to

- ✓ legalise undeclared and/or precarious domestic work by means of fiscal aid measures and simple declaration schemes to make family-work a job like any other
- ✓ combat stereotypes to ensure that care work and household tasks are seen as activities for both men and women
- ✓ establish a general framework to encourage the emergence and development of a professionalised sector for services to the family, in accordance with the specific features and cultural practices of each Member State
- ✓ eliminate the legal barriers that are currently significantly reducing the declared, direct employment of employees by families.

**The European Commission, the OECD and the ILO** need work together with the social partners to further develop appropriate provisions on decent working conditions and protection for workers under other new working relationships, in particular to maximise quality employment opportunities that can arise from the digitalisation of our economies for both men and women.

**New forms of employment** are developing so rapidly that contractual relationships cannot keep pace, which is why we need to look at their legal status. Clarification of the status of labour market intermediaries and online platforms is urgently required to enable them to be identified in the official statistics, to track their growth and establish which standards, obligations, liabilities and rules of operation should apply and which regulatory bodies should be responsible for inspection and enforcement.

The investigation should aim to give guidance for Member States to clarify, according to their national practices, the tax, social insurance and employment status of workers and the obligations of these platforms in relation to working hours, pay, holidays, pensions, maternity rights, employer-paid health insurance and other employment rights.

Although an EU level approach would be beneficial, most actions will need to be carried out at national, sectoral or workplace level.



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## 5. Links between gender equality, economic growth and employment rates.

Submitted by Grace Attard NCW Vice-President

### Justification

Despite the progress made and the positive results achieved, the economic potential of women has not been adequately realised. Moreover, the unprecedented international economic and financial crisis will probably have a different impact on men and women, given their different situations in the economic, social and family circle.

Combating gender inequality is not just a moral issue: it is also a matter of better managing human resources. A larger number of women in employment will create more wealth and consume more goods and services, and will help to increase tax receipts.

Mixed teams in the workplace give more potential for innovation. Giving couples the means to fulfil their

desire to have a child by enabling parents to keep their jobs is a way of combating the demographic deficit. If Europe wants to invest in people, it must first address the disadvantages women suffer<sup>12</sup>.

NCW supports the new initiative by the European Commission (23.09.2015) which Commissioner Vera Jourova (Friday 28.10.16), spoke about during a meeting in Malta. The aim of this initiative is to modernize and adapt the current policy of the European Union so that parents with children or those with dependent relatives can better balance their caring responsibilities and professional life. including affordable childcare, flexible working hours and incentives for men, such as paid paternity leave to take more care responsibilities in their families

The discussion opened up various shortcomings regarding equality. While female labour market participation in the EU was 63.5% in 2014, which is 11.5% below the Europe 2020 agenda target of 75% for men and women, in Malta, currently the rate of female employment is still very low at 53.6% against 81.4% for men.

The contribution of women to the economy must be prioritized. The recent World Economic Forum report on Gender Equality placed Malta as the worst country in Europe. According to Eurfound data, the estimated costs of the gender employment gap amount to more than 300bn Euros per year (or 2.5% of the current EU GDP). The issue of women on boards, a topic that was highly controversial in Malta less than two years ago is still unresolved. More women than men are in undeclared work.

There is a lack of female researchers and it is still very difficult for female graduates to combine work and family responsibilities and often have to opt for lower paid jobs. Women work fewer hours than men or take a one-year break after giving birth. All these barriers are reflected in women's lower pensions entitlement and increased risk of poverty. Measures to address gender issues in employment must offer incentives to both fathers and mothers as otherwise we are still re-enforcing a culture of discrimination.

### Further Justification

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<sup>12</sup> COM(2009) 77 final: "The Member States with the highest birth rates are currently those which have also done the most to improve work-life balance for parents, and which have a high rate of female employment."

According to an EU analysis note<sup>13</sup>, the contribution of gender equality to the economy should not be measured purely in terms of the profitability of businesses. It is a productive investment that contributes to overall economic progress, growth and employment. Gender equality can contribute to development

- 1) through increased female labour market participation, which means that better use is made of the investment put into their education and training;
- 2) through greater economic independence;
- 3) through the integration of women into the fiscal system, thus contributing to the welfare state.

## **Recommendations**

Working for gender equality must be considered as a means:

- of promoting growth and jobs, and not as a cost or a constraint;
- of strengthening the economic independence of women, who will consume more goods and services;
- of investing in human resources by requiring equal access to vocational training and lifelong learning, placing more emphasis on experience and diversity;
- of creating the conditions for better reconciling work, family and private life, by offering flexible ways of organising working time chosen in the interests of businesses and their staff, by enhancing care services, by considering early years childcare not as a burden but as an investment, and by encouraging men to do their share of family tasks;
- of stimulating entrepreneurship among women by supporting business start-ups and transfers, and improving their access to finance;
- of ensuring that the gender perspective is taken into account in the short-, medium- and long-term measures taken in the light of the economic and financial crisis, at both at the level of the European Union as a whole and within each Member State;
- of reducing in-work poverty (single parents in under-paid, unstable jobs are often women) by stepping up access to work, a secure job and a decent wage.

## **Further recommendations**

### ***To the Commission:***

Request to monitor and evaluate Member States' efforts to implement the roadmap for equality between women and men, and request to become a forum for exchanging good practice and experience.

### ***To the social partners:***

Request to implement their common framework for action on gender equality by focusing on gender roles, promoting women in the decision-making process, supporting work-life balance and closing the pay gap;

to improve knowledge and instruments for combating job segregation and promoting gender balance;

to professionalise jobs providing services to individuals by better recognising the skills needed to carry them out.

### ***To all civil society actors and political leaders:***

- to consider more flexible retirement arrangements, where people could take time off before they actually retire so that they can meet family commitments;
- to improve the availability of household support services by developing public services and setting up new businesses;

- to increase the number of women in management positions in public administrations and on boards of directors and executive boards in public and private enterprises:
- to take a broadminded approach to this issue, planning for very short-term measures as well as long-term work strategies.
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***Source EESC Opinion SOC 338 Links between Gender Equality, economic growth and employment rates.***



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## 6. A European Accessibility Act – More accessibility for persons with disability

*Submitted by Amy Camilleri Zahra as part of the NCW Social Issues and Health Committee*

### Justification/s

- People with disabilities make an enormous contribution to European society, but often face barriers that prevent them from participating in society on an equal basis with others.
- More specifically, persons with disability often meet with obstacles and barriers when it comes to accessing mainstream products and services.
- The demand for accessible products and services is high particularly as the number of persons with disability in the world is set to rise to 800 million by the year 2015, whereby 45 million of those reside in the European Union.
- These numbers are set to continue rising with the ageing of the European Union's population. It is expected that in 2020 there will be approximately 120 million persons in the European Union who will have multiple and/or minor disabilities.
- Improving the functioning of the internal market for accessible products and services will serve both the needs of these citizens/consumers and companies.
- Accessibility is also one of the objectives of the European Disability Strategy 2010-2020.
- The European Union as a region also ratified the UNCRPD.
- Malta has ratified the UNCRPD in October 2012 with the UNCRPD coming into effect in November 2012.

### Recommendation/s

- a) We propose that Maltese representatives in the EU support the proposal for the European Accessibility Act.
- b) During the 2017 Maltese Presidency of the Council of the European Union, Malta should put the accessibility of mainstream products and services on the agenda by promoting this Act.
- c) This act will create a level playing for all manufacturers and service providers. This will bring a conformity in standards.
- d) **Accessibility in every-day life should be addressed. This includes accessibility of pavements, entrances to shops and public service buildings and others that arise from time to time affecting persons with different disabilities**
- e) As part of the Directive an EU wide accessibility labelling scheme should be introduced. This will facilitate shopping and better access to services for persons with disability. In addition, companies will be able to use the scheme once they conform to the standards.
- f) The Directive should provide for enforcement of this legislation across Member States.







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## **7. Fighting obesity by promoting breastfeeding in the work place and community environment .**

**Submitted by Malta Union of Midwives and Nurses**

### **Justification**

- a. In Malta 40% to 48% of children and 58% of adults are considered overweight or obese. In view of this, the greatest health problems will be seen in the next generation of adults, with a rise in heart disease, diabetes, cancer, gall bladder disease, osteoarthritis, endocrine disorders and other obesity related conditions. It is estimated that by 2020 this will cost Malta €35 million a year.
- b. Breast milk is the ideal food for newborn and infants. It contains all the nutrients needed for the healthy development of children. It protects the infant from common childhood illnesses. Moreover adolescents and adults who were breastfed as babies are less likely to be overweight or obese.
- c. Malta has the lowest breastfeeding rate when compared to other EU countries both at time of discharge and within the first months of life. Although breastfeeding has increased, exclusive breastfeeding remains at a level of around 55% at discharge from hospital after delivery. Mothers still have major concerns about breastfeeding in public as very limited places are still being provided in the community for breastfeeding even though the National Breastfeeding policy and action plan has been launched in 2015. Moreover women frequently attribute early weaning to an unsupportive work environment, especially when they have to go back to work, as not all employers are readily available to provide a friendly environment where these women can express their breast milk, or even have their babies brought to them for breast feeding during working hours.

### **Recommendation/s**

- a. The World Health Organization recommends that children are breastfed within an hour of birth, given only breast milk for their first six months of life. Adequate breastfeeding counseling and support are essential for mothers and families to initiate and maintain optimal breastfeeding practices.
- b. A national campaign should be launched to strengthen the education of the general public and employers on the benefits of breastfeeding according to the National breastfeeding Policy and action Plan 2015 - 2020.
- c. Provide guidance on the necessary facilities needed in public places and amenity areas to increase designated places for the safety and comfort of breastfeeding mothers and babies.
- d. To inform employers on the importance of facilitating the return of breastfeeding mothers to the work environment, by ensuring family friendly measures such as flexible hours, time off and reasonable breaks for breastfeeding. Moreover by providing adequate accommodations for the expressing and storing of breast milk.

## References:

The National breastfeeding Policy and Action Plan 2015- 2020

A Healthy weight for life: a national Strategy for Malta 2012 -2020

Lactation/breastfeeding Policy 2014: Society for Human Resource Management  
<https://www.shrm.org/resoucesandtools/tools-and-samples/policies/pages/breastfeedingpolicy.aspx>

The World Health Organization's infant feeding recommendation (2015)

[http://www.who.int/nutrition/topics/infantfeeding\\_recommendation/en/](http://www.who.int/nutrition/topics/infantfeeding_recommendation/en/)



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## 8. Women and Transport

Submitted by Grace Attard NCW Vice-President

### Justification

#### State of affairs

All dimensions of the transport sector - air, sea, road, rail, inland navigation, space, logistics - are traditionally male-dominated and as a result:

- transport policy is male-oriented: devised by men and centred around their lifestyle;
- employment in the sector is primarily male and is geared to male workers;
- the values embedded in the industry show little support for females in the sector and lack gender-sensitivity;
- gender consideration is absent from EU transport policy.

The EU Commissioner for Transport is focusing on the opportunities for the transport sector to better include women and generate more economic, social and sustainable growth.

For women, this includes issues of safety, gender-based violence and sexual harassment from fellow workers or users. Additionally, women can face an interruption of their career through maternity and caring provision. Therefore, re-entering the sector requires flexible working arrangements, retraining and measures to avert loss of seniority/status.

When analysing trends in employment, distinction should be made between **mobile** and **non-mobile** personnel in transport. Female transport employees find it more difficult to work away from home and thus in almost all transport professions except aviation, mobile jobs are male-dominated. Traditionally mobile jobs are better remunerated, thus the gender pay gap in transport becomes persistent and harder to address

#### Policy aims for better gender balance

For the EU transport sector to succeed with strong sustainable growth, it must have **gender neutrality in its policy- and decision-making process**. Women must be equally involved in both, not through positive discrimination but on merit, competence and transparency of appointments.

A higher participation of women at senior level, including as non-executive directors, has been proven to bring bottom-line benefits to companies<sup>14</sup>. Women's engagement within the decision-making process will assist companies, institutions and associations to innovate and bring new market insights.

**A gender diverse workforce** promotes collaboration, understanding and tolerance and has been proven to drive competitiveness, productivity and corporate social responsibility, ensuring retention of both genders.

### Key recommendations

- collect data and establish key indicators to identify and deconstruct barriers;
- ensure women are visible and active in policy- and decision-making, and planning;

- proactively engage both sexes in creating a better working environment, including equal pay for equal work, within all the diversities of the sector;
- take actions towards attracting women to employment opportunities with measures to improve employment quality;
- better engage universities and career services to promote the wide scope of the sector, including technology, R&D and engineering;
- proactively promote the role of women in business;
- empower women and the sector to be more inclusive.

Interest in transport is initiated by education, family, experience, necessity or need for innovation. Participation in the sector is the result of career opportunities offered in education institutions, qualifications, skills or networks. Remaining in the sector can be dependent on human resources development, training, upskilling and diversification, working conditions, salary, working time and work-life balance.

Simple non bureaucratic procedures of **regular auditing and reporting of progress made by transport actors** (policymakers, companies, trade unions, transport associations, stakeholders) on gender equality are recommended. This should include the education of users in overcoming stereotypes and perceptions.

Women and men should be given the same opportunities to influence the creation, design and management of the transport system, where their values are given equal weight

### **Education, Data collection and Indicators**

**1. Education:** review the education system and the promotion of the roles in the transport sector to redefine the assumption that the sector is only suitable for males. Identify female role models to promote the opportunities. in favour of gender equality in transport professions, namely **actions attracting women to employment opportunities** in the transport sector with measures to **improve employment quality** across all modes of transport, working conditions, **training and Lifelong Learning (LLL), operational and occupational health and safety and good career opportunities**, all of which contribute to a better work-life-balance

**2. Data collection:** Data analysis can be used to examine the employment cycle, where there are obstacles to women's entry and progression in the sector. Thereafter, **industry-specific instruments** can be created to address the weaknesses that discriminate against women.

The EU Commission and Member States could better support the industry through **data collection and statistical analyses that are gender sensitive and gender disaggregated**, highlighting key areas for investment or support.

**3. Indicators:** The following indicators should be considered:

- guidance and advice from secondary and tertiary education;
- qualifications and training – including secondary education through to higher education;
- recruitment salaries;
- career opportunities and barriers;
- work-life balance
- health and safety in the workplace;
- working culture, including a breakdown by gender roles;
- women in policy and decision-making, including at company board level;
- allocation of resources for female entrepreneurs.

## Employment Challenges

- Despite a number of initiatives under the European Social Fund and the EQUAL programme, the transport sector remains a segregated industry where men are predominantly concentrated as drivers/pilots, technicians or in occupations involving physical work and a heavy workload, whereas women are predominantly in service-related and administrative jobs.
- More women are employed in the service activities developed within the emerging supply chains, logistics companies, etc. Today, the implementation of new technologies makes it possible for women and men equally to take up jobs in sectors that have traditionally involved heavy physical work.
- However, work life balance remains a problem and continues to hamper women's employment in mobile jobs
- The general perception that certain jobs, workplaces, working time arrangements are exclusively suitable for men is wide-spread. This has considerable impact on recruitment and retention of female workforce in occupations where women are under-represented
- With regard to equal pay, segregation in transport maintains the gender pay gap. Men are concentrated in technical jobs, regarded as more qualified, while women are predominant in administration and customer service. Men work longer hours and account for more full-time jobs in transport, whereas women tend to opt for more flexible work arrangements which have restricted opportunities.

## Health and safety

- A gender sensitive approach for health and safety in transport provides a number of challenges as the majority of jobs with a visible risk for occupational accidents and illnesses are male dominated. This diminishes chances for a gender differentiated approach in health and safety policies/measures. However, varying occupations, tasks, working conditions or hours worked entail different exposure to hazards.
- Women could be better integrated into the transport sector through positive action, which requires at least new sanitary infrastructure, changing rooms and accommodation and a more reasonable assessment of continuous working time, as well as stress, repetitive movements and fatigue related to each transport mode.
- The European Union transport sector has a high incidence of all forms of violence, where many types of incidents go unreported. Third party violence is equally problematic in transport as women are predominantly concentrated in those transport professions involving direct contact with the customer and thus tend to be more exposed to aggressive behaviour and attacks from customers.
- Front desk personnel have to confront growing levels of public frustration caused by congestions, delays or lack of information during delays. In this context more should be done to encourage transport companies to adopt **zero-tolerance workplace violence policy**

## Further Recommendations

- To overcome under-representation of women and to use the talent pool of women in the transport labour market more efficiently and extensively, the following tools that could be used to **build the capacity of women at all levels**. This can be done through the development of EU projects within DG Transport, or in collaboration with other established EU projects-partnerships:

- develop a **coordinated approach** between institutions, industry associations, trade unions, stakeholders working in the sector, to establish a campaign welcoming women to the transport industry and highlighting the added value to the EU economy and social fabric of **better inclusion of women** in the sector. *This was recently achieved by the UK Transport for London, where 100 women in the transport sector were showcased. Celebrating their success demonstrated the important role of women in transport and engaged, motivated and inspired current and future generations of female transport workers;*

**equality in transport:** This is not industry-specific, but studies show that the inequalities in the transport sector are a key reason why women do not consider engaging more in the sector. These issues should be addressed as a priority:

- equal pay for equal work,
- transparent recruitment process,
- flexible work practices - including job sharing and part-time work opportunities,
- attracting talent – considering mature as well as young female workers, both with and without high level qualifications,
- decision-making - include more women on company boards, within management structures, within trade unions beyond membership level, and within policy making.

**Mentoring:** increasing the support mechanisms, providing knowledge and experience, creating networks and giving guidance. This can be provided internally within companies and between employee levels, externally between companies and comparable transport sectors, and through established mentoring programmes without a focus solely on transport. Mentoring networks should contain both male and female participants..

**Development programs:** creating the training that will allow for **skills development and professional qualification** attainment to increase competences without gender bias, thus ensuring equality of competence levels for recruitment or promotions.

Promote **innovation and small business in transport:** identify women working in small to medium-sized enterprises to identify new trends, innovation and R&D possibilities. **Showcase successes.** *Best practice:the Women 1st Top 100 Club is a network of the most influential women in hospitality, passenger transport, travel and tourism, who act as ambassadors and role models for the female leaders of tomorrow (<http://women1st.co.uk/top-100>).*



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## 9. A fairer agro-food supply chain

Submitted by Grace Attard and Jeanette Borg

### Unfair business-to-business trading practices in the food supply chain

#### Justification

##### Current situation

- The agro-food supply chain connects important and diverse sectors of the European economy that are essential for economic, social and environmental welfare as well as for the health of Europeans. However, in recent years there has been a shift in bargaining power in the supply chain, mostly to the advantage of the retail sector and some transnational companies and to the detriment of suppliers, in particular primary producers.
- A small number of companies now dominate the marketing and sale of food. For example, many grocery markets in a strongly increasing number of Member States are majority controlled by between three and five retailers, with a collective market share of between 65 and 90% among modern retailers<sup>15,16</sup>.
- UTPs have wide-ranging effects on operators, consumers and the environment. However, such practices are profitable by their very nature and therefore attract short-term gains for those who apply them, to the detriment of other stakeholders in the supply chain
- The concentration of bargaining power has led to the abuse of positions of dominance causing weaker operators to become increasingly vulnerable to Unfair Trading Practices (UTPs). This transfers economic risk from the market up the supply chain and has a particularly negative impact on consumers and some operators, e.g. farmers, workers and SMEs.

#### Unfair Trading Practices (UTPs) and their impact

UTPs can broadly be defined as practices that significantly deviate from good commercial conduct and are contrary to good faith and fair dealing<sup>17</sup>.

Examples of such practices include, but are absolutely not limited to:

- unfair transfer of commercial risk;
- unclear or unspecified contractual terms;
- unilateral and retroactive changes to contracts, including price;
- lower product quality or consumer information without communication, consultation or agreement to the buyers;
- contributions to promotional or marketing costs;
- delayed payments;
- claims for wasted or unsold products;
- use of product cosmetic specifications to reject consignments of food or reduce the price paid;
- pressure to cut prices;
- charges for fictitious services;
- last minute order cancellations and forecast volume deductions;
- threats of delistings;

<sup>15</sup> Friends of the Earth, 2015. [Eating from the Farm](#).

<sup>16</sup> Consumers International, 2012. *The relationship between supermarkets and suppliers: What are the implications for consumers?*

<sup>17</sup> European Commission, 2014. [Tackling unfair trading practices in the business-to-business food supply chain](#) COM(2014) 472 final.



- flat-rate charges that companies levy on suppliers as a requirement for inclusion in a list of suppliers ("pay to stay").

### **Impact of UTPs on suppliers**

- The various types of the impact of UTPs on the operators that suffer from them are diverse and far-reaching and can lead to reduced income for suppliers, either through price deductions or because of the increased costs incurred as a result of these practices.
- The pressure exerted on farmers and food processors, and the consequent downward pressure on prices, also leads to reduced wages both in the agricultural sector and for employees in the food manufacturing industry. In the case of more permanent labour, the race to the bottom for lower prices also leads to reduced wages in order for suppliers to make their margins.
- SMEs are often the most vulnerable to UTPs, e.g. in the global banana trade, where the small scale farmers' produce is used to "top up" larger plantation volumes, these suppliers are at risk of being the first to be cut out of a sale if an order is cancelled without due notice<sup>18</sup>.
- The fresh produce sector is particularly susceptible to UTPs due to the high perishability of the produce it supplies to the European market. Farmers have a limited time in which to sell their produce to ensure adequate shelf-life for the end client and ultimate consumer, and this is often abused by commercial buyers for retailers and middlemen by imposing unnegotiable price deductions on receipt of goods.
- The increase in sales of "own-brand" (white labels or retailer-owned brands) products by retailers allows them to change suppliers frequently if they find a cheaper producer either during or after contractual relations have begun. However, "own-brand" products are not unfair in themselves and can assist SMEs entering the market and offer consumers a variety of choice.
- In case of selling below the cost of production, and the use of basic agricultural products, such as milk, cheese, fruit and vegetables as "loss leaders" (i.e. below the purchasing cost) by large-scale retailers and some transnational companies, are a threat to the long-term sustainability of European agricultural production.

### **Impact of UTPs on consumers**

- Unfair Trade Practices (UTPs) have a significant negative effect on European consumers. Larger operators often absorb the costs presented by UTPs, but smaller businesses are placed under increased pressure and are unable to invest and innovate, excluding them from high-value markets<sup>19</sup>. This results in reduced consumer choice and availability and ultimately increased consumer prices.
- The lack of transparency on labels is to the detriment of consumers, who are unable to make informed purchasing choices despite having, on several occasions, expressed the desire to favour healthy, environment-friendly and quality agri-food products that are linked to their local area. This has a negative impact on consumer confidence levels, further exacerbating the crisis affecting the agricultural sector.
- Price pressures force processors of food to produce as cheaply as possible – which can affect the quality of food available for consumers. To reduce costs, in some cases companies use cheaper raw materials, which affect the quality and value of foodstuffs - for example, the use of trans fats in many products replacing healthier oils and fats from Europe.

### **Impact of UTPs on the environment**

The impact of UTPs on the environment needs to be recognised. UTPs encourage overproduction as a means for suppliers to insure themselves against uncertainty. This overproduction can lead to food being wasted, causing an unnecessary depletion of resources, including land, water, agrichemical and fuel<sup>20,21</sup>.

<sup>18</sup> Make Fruit Fair, 2015. Banana Value Chains in Europe and the Consequences of Unfair Trading Practices. [http://www.makefruitfair.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/banana\\_value\\_chain\\_research\\_FINAL\\_WEB.pdf](http://www.makefruitfair.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/banana_value_chain_research_FINAL_WEB.pdf).

<sup>19</sup> Fair Trade Advocacy Office, 2014. *Who's got the power? Tackling imbalances in agricultural supply chains*. Page 4.

<sup>20</sup> EP IMCO, 2016. Report on unfair trading practices in the food supply chain (2015/2065(INI)).

## Addressing UTPs

- The European Parliament's resolution on UTPs in the food supply chain, was adopted on 7 June 2016 with strong cross-party support<sup>22</sup>. The Parliament highlights the need for framework legislation at EU level and calls on the Commission to put forward proposals to tackle UTPs in the food supply chain, so as to ensure fair earnings for farmers and a wide choice for consumers.
- The Parliament also highlights the fact that the Supply Chain Initiative (SCI) and other national and EU voluntary systems should be promoted not as an alternative but "as an addition to effective and robust enforcement mechanisms at Member State level, ensuring that complaints can be lodged anonymously and establishing dissuasive penalties, together with EU-level coordination"<sup>23</sup>.
- The Commission suggests that the Supply Chain Initiative (SCI) allows for the self-regulation of UTPs. However, the lack of financial sanctions means that purchasers are not deterred from using otherwise profitable UTPs. For example, Tesco PLC was recently found to be conducting unfair trading practices when dealing with its suppliers despite being a member of the Supply Chain Initiative (SCI)
- The absence of farmers and trade unions in the SCI's membership does not adequately address their interests as key stakeholders. Moreover the initiative is not supported by farmers arguing that it did not work as it increased risk for farmers due to a lack of anonymity.

## Current enforcement mechanisms for preventing UTPs in Europe

- Twenty Member States have legislative provisions and regulatory initiatives, but their success is still moderate<sup>24</sup>. Fifteen of these Member States have introduced measurements in the last five years, demonstrating the significant prevalence of UTPs in the supply chain. However there is great disparity between the different levels of regulation, and many national enforcers are unable to issue financial sanctions or accept anonymous complaints.
- The UK's Groceries Supply Code of Practice<sup>25</sup> (GSCOP) is regarded as one of the most progressive legislative measures for preventing UTPs<sup>26</sup>. Prior to the establishment of this code, a voluntary code of practice existed but was found to be ineffective at preventing UTPs due to its lack of regulation.
- GSCOP is regulated by the Groceries Code Adjudicator (GCA) who has the legal power to receive anonymous complaints regarding UTPs, launch investigations ex-officio, publicise malpractice conducted by these businesses, and fine retailers up to 1% of their annual turnover for breaches of GCSOP. However, despite its achievements, the GCA can only regulate the relationship between retailers and their direct suppliers (largely based in the UK). This issue presents "moral hazards" in which both retailers and their direct suppliers transfer risk to indirect suppliers by UTPs.

## Call for a European network of national enforcers to prevent UTPs

There is the need for the establishment of a European network of enforcement authorities to prevent UTPs. The nature of UTPs both requires and warrants EU legislation to prohibit them, so as to protect all food suppliers, wherever they are located, including in third countries. In order for this to be effective, enforcement authorities within the network must have the following functions:

- Free access to all players and stakeholders in the EU food supply chain, regardless of geographical location.

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<sup>21</sup> Feedback, 2015. [Food Waste In Kenya: uncovering food waste in the horticultural export supply chain.](#)

<sup>22</sup> European Parliament resolution of 7 June 2016 on unfair trading practices in the food supply chain (2015/2065(INI))

<sup>23</sup> European Parliament resolution (2015/2065(INI)), *ibid.*

<sup>24</sup> COM(2016) 32 final.

<sup>25</sup> UK GOV. 2016: [www.gov.uk/government/publications/groceries-supply-code-of-practice](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/groceries-supply-code-of-practice).

<sup>26</sup> The code was established as result of an investigation conducted by the UK Competition Commission that found retailers to have a disproportionate amount of power in the supply chain leading to the transfer of risk up the supply chain.

- Measures to effectively protect the anonymity and confidentiality of stakeholders who wish to submit complaints about UTPs.
- Ability to investigate businesses ex officio with regard to abuses of buying power.
- Ability to issue financial and non-financial penalties to offending businesses.
- EU-level coordination between Member States' enforcers.
- Potential for international coordination with non-EU enforcement bodies to prevent UTPs that occur both inside and outside the single market.

It should be the objective of all Member States to establish national enforcement bodies to deal with complaints relating to UTPs. These bodies should be designed with the above functions as a minimum standard. Legislative measures for preventing UTPs can and should be cost-effective.

The European Parliament's resolution also calls on to the Commission to ensure effective enforcement mechanisms, such as the development and coordination of a "network of mutually recognised national authorities at EU level"<sup>27</sup>.

The British Institute of International and Comparative Law (BIICL) has recommended that the EU should adopt a directive to establish common objectives amongst Member State enforcement authorities to prevent UTPs and include rules for European-coordination of these bodies<sup>28</sup>.

### **Current industry good practice to prevent unfair trading practices**

- Fixed pricing or minimum guaranteed pricing contracts based on fair negotiations between buyers and suppliers offer the latter a greater degree of security than when selling produce on the open market. However, whilst these types of contract guarantee set prices for suppliers, this practice would be enhanced if volumes of produce were fixed or had minimum guarantees..
- Some suppliers to the EU have begun to employ third party agents to inspect produce on arrival at destination so as to prevent spurious product rejection claims from importers. Such claims are made when forecasted supply and demand has changed, thus increasing the risk for buyers at the latter stages of the supply chain.
- There is seasonality with this issue, since when supply is high and therefore prices are low, suppliers are at greater risk of receiving claims compared to when supply is scarce.
- Whilst the use of third party agents certainly reduces the frequency of such rejection claims for exporters, such services are an additional cost for suppliers, thus further limiting their capacity for investment and innovation in their business. Furthermore, smaller suppliers are generally unable to afford such assistance and so do not benefit from this practice

### **Alternative food supply chains**

- There are many examples of alternative supply chains where fairer trading practices exist and a fairer balance of distribution or reallocation occurs. There are some promising approaches in the cooperative area, but these are increasingly threatened by the growing power of business groups and multinationals.
- To increase fairness in the EU's food supply chain, a combination is required of steps to address the power hold of large businesses in the supply chain preventing UTPs, and to strengthen countervailing power by encouraging the development of cooperatives and alternative channels for food distribution
- Community-supported agriculture (CSA) schemes and other farmer-consumer cooperatives allow consumers to contribute directly to the production of the food that they eat. Recent figures suggest there are currently 2,776 of these CSA schemes operating in Europe, feeding 472,055 consumers<sup>29</sup>. Larger models of product "box schemes" also benefit from short supply chains to deliver produce directly either to consumer households or to centralised collection points.

<sup>27</sup> European Parliament resolution (2015/2065(INI)), *ibid*.

<sup>28</sup> Link [http://www.biicl.org/documents/872\\_biicl\\_enforcement\\_mechanisms\\_report\\_-\\_final\\_w\\_exec\\_sum.pdf?showdocument=1](http://www.biicl.org/documents/872_biicl_enforcement_mechanisms_report_-_final_w_exec_sum.pdf?showdocument=1).

<sup>29</sup> European CSA Research Group, 2015. Overview of Community Support Agriculture in Europe. <http://urgenci.net/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/Overview-of-Community-Supported-Agriculture-in-Europe.pdf>.

- The direct sale of agri-food products by farmers, for example at *farmers' markets*, have a dual advantage: for producers abusive practices are absent and they can benefit from a greater degree of autonomy and increased revenue, while consumers may have access to fresh, genuine and sustainable products, the origin of which is certain.

In one study<sup>30</sup>, it was found that farmers received much higher incomes for their produce using these supply chains rather than traditional markets. Such initiatives should be further supported by public funding, such as from the CAP's second pillar payments, as they generate growth and jobs, as well as responding to consumers' needs.

## **The local situation**

### **Challenges and opportunities**

- farmers still depend on middlemen, therefore they are still price takers
- the closed island mentality is hindering diversification in the sector
- education is a crucial point of change within the industry
- investing in young farmers is a way forward
- less red tape in the agri industry

Furthermore, a Europe-wide information and awareness-raising campaign on the value of food should be launched. Greater awareness among consumers about the importance of food production and increased appreciation of food are proving to be increasingly necessary and might contribute to fairer trading practices.



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## 10. Full and complete information regarding the morning-after pill (MAP)

Submitted by the Ivy Fleri - Malta Catholic Action Women's Branch

### English version

#### Justification

After the proposed legislation for the morning-after pill (MAP) which is available in the pharmacies in Malta, without the need for the prescription of a doctor,

Aware of the lack of important and correct information to ensure informed choices

#### Recommendations

We are of the opinion that the public and **more particularly young girls and women** should be completely and fully informed on how the MAP works, how, where and when it can be acquired, **what the effects are on the embryo and the physical and psychological side effects on the mother**

Government Health Department and the pharmacists who will be selling the MAP are responsible to ensure that everybody has full and correct information before resorting to the use of this medicine.

We urge other organisations to carry on with their vital work in presenting to the general public concrete evidence from renowned gynecologists and scientists who are carrying out research on this matter on the effects on the life of the embryo and the important principle that life begins at conception

### Maltese version

#### Informazzjoni shiha dwar il 'Morning-after pill' (MAP)

#### Gustifikazzjoni

Wara l-proposta ghal-legiżlazzjoni tal-'morning after pill' biex tkun tista' tinxtara mill-ispizeriji ta' Malta u minghajr il-bżonn ta' riċetta tat-tabib.

Konxji tan-nuqqas ta' informazzjoni shiha u korretta biex l-ghazliet isiru fuq taghrif mehtieg

#### Rakkomandazzjonijiet

Aħna ta' l-opinjoni li l-publiku u **b'mod partikolari lil tfajliet u in-nisa** għandhom ikunu infurmati sew kif din il-pillola taħdem, kif, fejn u meta tista' tiġi akkwistata u x'inhuma l-effetti tagħha fuq l-embrjun u l-effetti kemm fiżiċi u kemm mentali fuq l-omm

Id-Dipartiment tas-Saħħa tal-Gvern u l-ispizjara li jridu jbigħu din il-medicina huma responsabbli biex jigi sġurat li kullhadd ikollu l-informazzjoni korretta u shiha qabel ma jużaw din il-medicina.

Aħna nkomplu nheggu organizzazzjonijiet ohra biex ikompli x-xogħol siewi tagħhom billi jipprezentaw evidenza konkreta minn *gynecologists* magħrufa kif ukoll minn xjenzjati li qed jagħmlu ricerka f'dan il-qasam dwar l-effetti fuq il-hajja u l-principju fundamentali li l-hajja tibda mal-koncepiment

