

**Putting the Council of Europe Gender Equality Strategy 2018 - 2023 into action**

4th October, 2018

Auberge D'Aragon, Independence Square, Valletta

**Workshops proceedings**

**Strategic Objective 1: Prevent and combat gender stereotypes and sexism**

**Speaker and Moderator: Dr JosAnn Cutajar – University of Malta**

- Gender stereotypes can affect women, and men, throughout the life course
- Women are still considered as the main caregivers and consequently will take more time off work or enter lower paid jobs, affecting their pay and pension. Women can also be disadvantaged in employment due to assumptions that they will take time off work to take care of children
- Parental leave should be equally taken by both parents – given that parental leave is unpaid, women are more likely to utilise such leave since men tend to have higher paid jobs
- Women are also generally the main carers for adult dependents. Care services for the elderly are not as available and affordable as childcare services and informal carers may have difficulties to reconcile care with paid work
- It is the woman who usually takes time off from work to see to hospital appointments and other household requirements
- Gender segregation in education is still prevalent
- Persons working in the media need to be trained on gender equality
- Stereotypes affect us from a young age. More awareness campaigns are thus required to eradicate stereotypes when it comes to media, religion, job adverts etc.
- Various stakeholders can have an important role in combating stereotypes, including the family, employers, media professionals, employers and educators

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**Strategic objective 2: Prevent and combat violence against women and domestic violence**

**Speaker and Moderator: Dr Marceline Naudi – University of Malta**

- Culture and perception of sexism can lead to violence against women

- There should be more female and male role models
  - Stakeholders such as the police, teachers, and hairdressers can be further trained to recognise domestic violence
  - Training to students from a young age contributes to prevent and combat violence against women
  - Ongoing presence on the media is required to raise constant awareness
  - Elderly women and men have specific issues/needs in relation to domestic violence
  - An enhanced enforcement of the law is required
  - Affordable housing can encourage women to leave shelters and move on
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### **Strategic objective 3: Ensure the equal access of women to justice**

#### **Speaker and Moderator: Dr Lara Dimitrijevic – Women’s Rights Foundation**

- Women may have financial constraints to access justice
- Eligibility criteria for accessing legal aid need to be revised because women who need legal aid may be denied access
- The environment in our Law courts is very intimidating especially for women who are victims of domestic violence. The place is huge and always busy, victims have to wait for their court hearing next to their aggressor/s who tend to hire the best lawyers, and victims are asked if they would like to withdraw the case. Accompaniment should be introduced to aid female victims.
- When domestic violence occurs most women tend to find it very difficult to immediately leave the household due to fear, cultural stigma, financial dependence and children
- Quite often people going through difficult situations have very limited or no access to information on the available services
- Mainstream tools such as the media can be used to disseminate awareness on equal access to justice encouraging more victims to seek justice
- Media professionals and the judiciary need more training on gender equality
- Financial support for entities working in the sphere of violence against women is important

- More education on the subject at schools especially at primary level
  - We need to have a change in culture/mentality to avoid the “go back home and solve the issue internally” approach
  - A Coordinating Body (which could be based in every Social Security Department district office) can be set up to guide and help victims and provide information on the services available
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**Strategic objective 4: Achieve balanced participation of women and men in political and public decision-making**

**Speaker and Moderator: Prof Carmen Sammut – University of Malta**

- Family-friendly support structures, including childcare facilities and earlier working hours of parliament are crucial
  - Stereotypical notions that women’s main role should be in the family are still prevalent
  - Candidates from the same party can hinder women to take an active role
  - Women who have family members in politics have more chances of being elected
  - More role models can help combat the stereotypical notion that women’s role is only in the family and that women are not interested in politics but in trivial issues
  - There is the need to have full-time parliamentarians
  - More mentoring programmes at national level provide the necessary skills for women
  - Empower the younger generation to participate in political decision-making
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**Strategic objective 5: Protect the rights of migrant, refugee and asylum-seeking women and girls**

**Speaker and Moderator: Dr Katrine Camilleri – Jesuit Refugee Service**

- The media representation of migrants may perpetuate the idea that women migrants are sexualised whilst men are seen as criminals
- Gender mainstreaming is required as migrant men and women can be affected by different challenges

- A migrant woman faces double discrimination
  - Male cultural mediators in hospital for women can make them feel uncomfortable, and a Muslim migrant woman will not speak to a doctor if her husband is not there
  - Migrants can be isolated and lack support networks
  - Lack of affordable rent makes migrant women more dependant
  - We need to give migrants the ability, will and tools to enjoy equal rights
  - We have to change perceptions to stop considering migrants as victims or to make them feel inferior
  - More professional help for traumatised migrants may be required
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**Strategic objective 6: Achieve gender mainstreaming in all policies and measures**

**Speaker and Moderator: Ms Renee Laiviera – NCPE**

- Tailor-made courses to departments in the public administration are crucial
  - Gender mainstreaming is particularly relevant in areas such as health and pensions
  - Stop asking interview questions on the personal life of interviewees
  - No Gender Mainstreaming is happening, even Gender focal points within the organisations are not implementing gender mainstreaming
  - Gender mainstreamed policies can only be obtained through gender disaggregated data
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