

Questionnaire

Implementation of the Beijing Platform of Action

1.0 Overview

The Islands constitute a republic in the Mediterranean Sea, strategically placed between Italy and North Africa. Malta's location has given it a rich and varied history under rulers as diverse as the Phoenicians, the Romans, the Arabs, the Knights of St. John and the British have made Malta a cosmopolitan culture where north and south coexist with

achieved independence in 1964, and is based on parliamentary democracy and the rule of law. The Republic is based on a semi-presidential model with powers attributable to the President, the Prime Minister and Cabinet direct and control the executive and answer to Parliament. The judiciary is independent and is subject to the Constitution.

Malta's economy is largely based on manufacturing, tourism and services. The Maltese enjoy a high standard of living with universal access to education and social security. Malta is a candidate to join the European Union and is currently undergoing negotiations along with other candidates for accession.

Maltese society largely reflects the values and lifestyle of Mediterranean Europe. The predominance of Roman Catholicism as well as the British administrative tradition have both contributed to the Islands' distinctive character. The Islands are densely populated, and over 800,000 inhabitants speak their own language derived from Semitic roots.

number of females over 80 than men. 84.7% of females in Malta have completed primary education, as have 87.1% of males. Of the total employed population, 27.6% are female while 72.4% are male. Women

are predominantly employed in the manufacturing sector. Employed women tend, on the whole, to have higher educational qualifications than employed men. 4.6% of women are employed on both a full-time and a part-time job. Unemployment rates are below 5%.

There are 1.1 lone parents to every male. Most of these are female lone parents. Although the number of separated and unmarried parents is increasing, the majority of female lone parents are mothers. 11% of female lone parents are in full-time employment in the private sector, while 1.6% are in public sector employment. According to the Census of 1995, over 56% of lone parents have a gross annual income equal to less than that of a typical family, that is, a typical poverty measure.

The Government has upheld a firm commitment to the principles of equality between women and men since 1989:

Equality between women and men is a fundamental principle of the Constitution of Malta. The promotion of equality and the removal of all forms of discrimination on grounds of sex are the primary objectives of the Government in political, social, economic and cultural spheres of Malta.

As identified in the Platform for Action, the Government of Malta, as identified in the Platform for Action, include:

the mainstreaming of gender equality in decision-making throughout Maltese society

educational and health services to have more educational male employees. Unemployment rates

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Malta's Progress

Successive administrations have followed policy guidelines

The promotion of equality and the removal of all forms of discrimination on grounds of sex are the primary objectives of the Government in political, social, economic and cultural spheres of Malta.

Critical areas of concern for the Government of Malta include:

the mainstreaming of gender equality in decision-making throughout Maltese society

Equal female participation in the labour force

1.2 Major Achievements

Pursuit of these goals has resulted in legislative development and the implementation of programmes in favour of women. Women today enjoy *de jure* equality with men and far higher levels of education and labour force participation than in the previous decade. A zero-tolerance attitude to violence against women has been consistently professed, and legal measures have been introduced to enable women to balance work and family responsibilities. Measures are equally accessible to male parents. A definite change in public attitude towards women's social and economic participation has definitely occurred in the direction of equal status.

low participation in top decision-making in political and judicial life as well as the top echelons of the service and senior management, still pose a *de facto* equality.

However, women's positions, particularly at the top echelons of the service and senior management, still pose a considerable challenge.

1.3 : Situation since 1995

covered by the national action plan, more attention needs to be given to the social and economic status of women in precarious work and elderly or disabled women in need of care. Over 50% of lone parents declare income below half the median wage, and there is broad anecdotal consensus that the living conditions of a number of elderly disabled women verge on the substandard.

As regards sectoral attention needs to be given to women in precarious work and lone parents and elderly disabled women in substandard housing.

Systematic care services, although the need for such services has increased somewhat since 1995, and has not yet been adequately addressed, through for instance, universal access to day care services.

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tackling of female poverty was an identified priority in the Platform for Action, this goal does not feature among the national machinery's principal objectives for the year 2000.

more issue on the sexual and reproductive health of young females in a time of changing social norms, examined more closely and opened up to public debate.

4. Attention to Gender Equality

accepted today, and is reflected in the circulars, portrayals of gender perspectives

The validity of gender equality is widely reflected in political communications, civic of women in the media and a move to include across University faculties.

impact assessments across policy sectors, and in practice, and methodologies for consistent application are being developed. Initial efforts at institutionalising mainstreaming have been directed towards typically the trend-setter in employment relations, and mainstreaming principles will now be directed towards the public sector, education, religious institutions and the

the public sector. Greater effort towards the media.

1.5 Global

Global change has had little impact upon women's lives in Malta, although the prospects offered by services and e-commerce prove to open up a new and fruitful employment market for women. more actively promoted if this is to come about.

A privatisation programme for state-owned enterprises is under way in Malta, but it is far from clear that this will have any unwaffects on employment in general, or on women in particular.

towards contract work is also perceptible in Malta, but as women in Malta have generally tended to have interrupted careers in the private sector, this is unlikely to impact largely upon typical work patterns.

The most positive aspect of global change for Maltese women has been the inspiration and solidarity provided by attendance at various international conventions and conferences, planting the seeds of equality in Malta which continue to be carefully nurtured and are bearing fruit.

Part 2.

Financial and Institutional Measures



2.1 The National Budget

The Budget makes the following provisions for gender-specific matters:

- o Recurrent expenditure for the running of the Department for Women in Society.
- o A grant to the Commission for the Advancement of Women, under the *Programmes and Initiatives* section of the Expenditure Account of the Ministry for Social Policy.
- o Financing of the Domestic Violence Unit and the Child Protection Services Unit under the Foundation for Social Welfare Services.
- o Financing of a residential programme for female teenagers with behavioural problems.

ance and subsidy of the Childcare Pilot Project,

allocation has been made for 2000, targeted at the provision

of shelter for female survivors of domestic violence.

etary allocations on the above have all increased since

efforts are yet being made to undertake Gender Impact

formulation of the Budget nor is there any

Assessments prior to

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The Platform for Action has been implemented by Malta's national machinery, that is, the Commission for the Advancement of Women and the Department for Women. These two entities were established by Cabinet decision in 1989. The role of the former is to advise Government on matters relating to the promotion of equality, the eradication of discrimination and the advancement of women in society. The role of the latter is to execute the ideas and initiatives proposed by the Commission, through a mainstream approach and focal points across the public sector.

2.3 Post-Conference Coordination

After Beijing, the final report of the Commission was widely disseminated. Workshops on the implementation of the Platform for Action were held with key partners, all interested entities and focal points within government. The Department for Women in Society was responsible for this co-ordinated effort.

A Maltese representative attends annual conferences abroad, and on return, presents a report on the conference, learnings made and follow-up action required. The reports are then disseminated to relevant agencies.

2.4 Role of NGOs

The role of NGOs in Malta is mostly involved in women's issues. In Malta, NGOs provide invaluable assistance on the supporting for women and children undergoing abuse, and, through religious organisations, provide shelter for such persons. In general, there is still much scope for further fostering of innovative collaborations between government and civil society in Malta.

Part 3.

Critical Areas of Concern

1.0 Women and Poverty

1.1 Background

Poverty is by no means marked in Malta. There is no evident

homelessness and the level and coverage of non-contributory social security assistance are such as to ensure that nobody falls through the net – albeit a very modest one in need of revision. However, evidence of new forms of poverty is on the rise, and as in the developed world, concerns mainly female-headed lone parent families, women. Furthermore, a clear distinction is emerging between those who are able to work and those who are not. Two-income households may also be thought to be at risk of relative poverty.

Close liaison between the State and civil society agencies, particularly parish networks and religious organisations, has served to ensure basic standards of wellbeing for all. Universal minimum income has served to mitigate the misfortunes of many, but only experienced families have meant that a number of women are able to work despite the lack of organised childcare facilities.

1.2 Examples

1.2.1 Examples of Obstacles

Malta's social institutions are still largely based on the male breadwinner model and are thus proving somewhat slow to respond to new forms of gendered poverty. There are as yet no appropriate provisions for women who are unable to work. The absence of widely available and accessible childcare also has consequences on many women's ability to work. This inhibits them from joining the contributory arm of social security, which offers more generous benefits than the noncontributory one."

Certain anomalies in the Maltese Social Security Act require revision:

For instance, contributory benefit replacement rates for married

on a single person's basis while married men and women are carers

enjoy a married

1.4 Commitment to Further Action

to convene a working group
on income and poverty, and a
others.

The Central Office of Statistics is s
to study best practice in measu
gendered perspective will be taken,

second statutory childcare

plans are underway for the open

travellers, as well as a state-subsidised

women.

A report on the identification of gender bias within the Social Security

Committee on Welfare Reform, established in 1999 to review the operation of
Social Security Act.

2.0 Education and Training

2.1 Background

Education has been a key area of focus in the Maltese context.

Gender equality and effort has been made to

are stereotyping in schools and to promote gender equality

has been a priority for every government since 1980.

tertiary education has increased steadily. While in 1990 only 39.6% of
females continued studies after the obligatory secondary school, by
1999 51.6% of all University graduates were female.

2.1.1 Examples of success

A whole chapter of the new National Curriculum for Education is dedicated to matters of gender equality and focuses on the need for a gender mainstream approach in education.

A manual for teachers of Personal and Social Education in secondary

schools, has been launched. This manual aims to raise awareness in its pupils. Follow-up meetings were held with teachers to instill

A Gender Issues Committee has been established at the University of Malta. The Committee for the Advancement of Women is raising

gender in various faculty studies and to develop a Gender Assessment methodology.

Although women can be said to have true equality of opportunity in the education and training systems, greater attention needs to be paid to the link between the requirements of a restructuring workforce and women's occupational preferences.

Further awareness raising with primary and secondary school teachers

Training Corporation is also committed to enhance its efforts to provide equal opportunities in its training programmes with targeted at women, refugees.

d Health 3.0 Women

3.1 Back

n's health was drawn up at the end of 1994 by the the 'Advancement of Women' and national eld of matters concerning women's specific medical 'health' and psychosocial problems. The need was after female participation in decision-making in the The need for greater dissemination of health information was also noted, as was the need for the establishment of Well-Women Clinics and helplines.

A policy on

Commission

consultation

problems,

identified

health

3.2 Examples of Success

Sex-disaggregated statistics are compiled on a regular basis by the Department of Health Information and some improvement has been

cases suffered mostly by women. noted as to the incidence

s on issues related to women's health

Series of television prog

are held every four years

3.3 Examples of Obstacles

An Inter-Agency Forum on Violence against Women was set up in

social work services to survivors of domestic violence.

2: Examples of Success

programme in 1994 continues to meet a busy
other related entities such as the police and
empowering its clients)

awareness-raising activities and promotes
of violence.

and the police is carried out regularly.

workshops on domestic violence and
disseminated.

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seminar and a

n, which enjoyed a large turnout from the political

work of part legislation has
submitted for enactment.

er needs of survivors is

work and on the adequacy
in difficult situations is
be incorporated into

Welfare Development
case load and to liaise
voluntary organisations

The Unit carries out
a message of zero

Sensitisation of pro

disseminated

Sessions for perpetrators of violence are run on

A White Paper has been published which incor
strengthen national legislation on domestic viol
focus on perpetrators' responsibility. Th

distributed within government, professionals, a
organisations. This paper was accompanied

media

subsequently been finalised and awaits

Research on domestic violence and on t
being carried out.

Research studies on sexual harassment
of social structures in dealing with w
being commissioned, and their findi
programme improvements.

4.3 Examples of Obstacles

The number of social workers dealing with cases of domestic violence is inadequate, leading to case overload and restricted service.

There is not sufficient shelter space for women leaving an abusive partner.

4.4 Commitment to Further Action

A recruitment exercise for more social workers is underway.

Work is underway to operate a new shelter for persons leaving abusive homes.

5.0 Women and Armed Conflict

5.1 Examples of Success

There is no armed conflict in Malta.

5.2 Examples of Success

Recruitment to the Armed Forces of Malta is open to women.

Refugees in Malta have a right to basic health care and

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ed
of

5.4 Commitment to Further Action

6.0 Women and the Economy

6.1 Background

Malta complies with international labour conventions and the European Social Charter on matters affecting female labour participation.

Women's share of gainful employment remains on the low side, at around 26.5%.

Low- and high-levels of marriage

% of the gainfully occupied population, 1980-1999

in 26.5% in 1980. Women make up

employed. 59.8% of all persons whose

are women, two thirds of whom are

married.

Access

6.2.2 Example

Gender disc

discouraged

circulares have

discussed

the recently

primary and secondary education and

childcare centre at their workplace.

Conditions of part-time work have been improved, with part-timers

eligible since 1996 to pro-rated social benefits such as vacation and

sick leave. One-year unpaid parental leave and three-year carer

does their representation

in 1999 women made up

having risen only slightly

14.09% of all registered

primary occupation is t

married.

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Childcare Act has been drafted, which will be applicable to both

the public and private sectors. The Bill is currently

Incentives and subsidies have been included

primary and secondary education and

childcare centre at their workplace.

Conditions of part-time work have been improved, with part-timers

eligible since 1996 to pro-rated social benefits such as vacation and

sick leave. One-year unpaid parental leave and three-year carer

breaks for full-time public employees, both male and female, have been introduced.

Legislation protecting pregnant employees has come into force.

In 1998 a national conference on gender-specific statistics was held, following which the first two gender-disaggregated statistical publications were issued. These publications present tabular data and analysis on women's position in various sectors of Maltese society, and they should prove to be of great help for planning purposes.

A number of research studies have been commissioned by the national machinery, the results of which should enhance planning efforts. These studies include research into women's invisible contribution to the Maltese economy; women's perception of female political participation; analysis of Census data; values of Maltese women and

6.3 Examples of Obstacles

Women continue to carry a far greater burden of domestic tasks and there persists insufficient encouragement for men to take on responsibilities with their partners.

The statutory pilot project offering day care for children under three has been running since 1997.

Regulatory structures for greater flexibility in working patterns, such as teleworking, have not yet been developed. In fact, the need for flexible working patterns has not yet been part of public debate.

6.4 Commitment to Further

A firm policy decision has been taken to enable women's participation in the labour force.

Decisions are to be taken as to the state's role in the enabling of childcare provision.

A commitment to the collation of gender-disaggregated data will be maintained.

7.0 Women in power and decision-making

7.1 Background

Notwithstanding the absence of legal barriers, women have been more women have not contested and been elected to local government since its inception in 1993.

7.2 Examples of Success:

has increased:
all councils in
s various media
on stations, to
Workshops for
ical elections are held by the
by social gatherings to these
ressed by the Minister for Social

the number of females elected to Local C
steadily, rising from 19.4% in 1993 to 21.7% o
1999. The Department for Women in Society in
engagements with local newspapers, radios and
encourage female contestation of local elec
female candidates of loc
Department for Women I
candidates are also held,

rd Local Government
and Committees. The
period of 1993-1999 has gradually increased from six in 1993 to reach
due to nominations from
the national machinery, which
alms

Policy and the Minister for In
The number of women serving on Government
committee members to 1928 in
the Directory of Mature Women
contains profiles of qualified women

7.3 Examples of Obstacles

Female representation in Parliament is still extremely low, with only one female Minister in 1999.

Female representation on the judiciary is still low. There are no female magistrates in Malta, although 25%

Female representation in the

Part-time release from work is granted to public officers in the Maltese Public Service who are eligible to follow the two-year Diploma in Gender and Development. This should have positive spillover effects in public administration.

Competency in conducting Gender Impact Assessments has been developed by the Department for Women in Society. In 1999, such impact assessments have been carried out on three legal bills, relating to the establishment of the Tourism Authority; to Equal Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities; and the establishment of an Occupational Health and Safety Authority.

Arrangements are being made with the Commonwealth Secretariat to

conduct gender training for the year 2000.

Some of the measures in the Public Service which have been introduced include the opportunity for working reduced responsibility breaks for working parents with dependent children of relatives. This measure is largely utilised by

8.3 - Examples of Obstacles

There is as yet insufficient understanding of gender mainstreaming in the Maltese public

empowerment to participate in policy making if they are to ensure that gender issues have the necessary impact.

leave, some of which is forfeited if the actual date that initially envisaged

statutory matter of birth differ

8.4 - Commitment to Further Action

Gender Impact Assessment methodology will be refined further and made an integral part of the formulation and analysis of all law, policy and programmes.

Maternity leave will be extended to 14 weeks in the year 2001.

Legislation regarding protection of maternity at the place of work will be strengthened as from the year 2001.

9.0 Human Rights of Women

9.1 Background

Human rights of both women and men are upheld in the Maltese Constitution and enforced through the Courts of Law. In 1991, the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women was ratified by the Government of Malta. The 1993 amendments to the Civil Code brought about equal rights and obligations within marriage. The Constitution was also amended in that year to afford enforceable protection against gender discrimination.

9.2 Examples of Success

Discriminatory regulations have subsequently been brought into line with the Constitution. For instance, all discriminatory provisions have been removed from the income tax Act, and married women can now opt to be treated as individuals for income tax purposes or opt to sign their husband's tax return. The Social Security Act has been amended so that the status of "head of household" is no longer associated with the status of "head of household" and is now automatically associated with the status of "head of household".

The National Maternity Hospital has actively participated in a review of the structure and procedures of the Family Court that should offer a swifter and more personalised and

In 1999 amendments were made to the Citizenship Act which gave rise to an amendment regarding women's status. Children of Maltese men and women born before 1989 are granted the right to dual citizenship.

9.3. Examples of Obstacles

9.4. Commitment to Further Action

At the end of 1997, a project was established to review all legislation to ensure that women enjoy full legal protection. This was carried out

by a local group of experts, whom a project established in the

Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of Labour, the Ministry of the Advancement of Women and the Ministry for the Environment, Planning and the Rural Areas, in 1997. The project was drafted.

Commission

10.0 Women and the Media

10.1. In 1994 a national seminar on Women and the Media kicked off public debate on the way women are portrayed in the media and on the absence of women in news and current affairs.

