

# **COMMISSION ON DOMESTIC VIOLENCE**

**Annual Report**

**March 2007 – February 2008**



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## **Message**

Since being set up the Commission on Domestic Violence has shown drive and enthusiasm in the performance of its activities in this very sensitive area. With the assistance of professional people with expertise in this specialised area and the commitment of the Government that has always believed in such a Commission, it is of the utmost satisfaction to note that this Commission is delivering the required results.

The Government has supported and shall continue supporting this initiative which impinges directly on our society. There is common agreement that the fight against domestic violence should primarily be made in public and the Commission on Domestic Violence is doing this through ongoing education campaigns and the spreading of information to the public. This Commission is also continually embarking on research projects and is identifying projects for further training of professionals in this area.

In the past months the Commission on Domestic Violence set up two subcommittees that shall continue consolidating its presence within our society and the assistance that it gives to victims of domestic violence.

The drive and enthusiasm of this Commission manifest themselves not only in its internal meetings but also in the seminars and public meetings that its members attend. The Commission on Domestic Violence makes its presence more felt in society by means of ongoing campaigns aimed at educating the public on this social reality. This is also achieved by means of intensive campaigns in the media.

The Commission on Domestic Violence is also committed to bring forward proposals for the updating of the present legislation such that victims of this violence are given more protection.

During the course of last year the Commission continued to widen its operations and its members visited the shelters that host the victims of domestic violence, so that the Commission will be in a position to familiarise itself with the services that are offered by these centres.

Since the day that the Commission was set up the Government has undertaken to support it in all its needs.

**The Hon John Dalli**  
Minister for Social Policy

**Foreword**

It is with pleasure that I present the annual report of the Commission on Domestic Violence for 2007/8. I say this because I believe it demonstrates the great amount of work undertaken by the Commission. Having said that of course, a lot of the work which took so much of our time and energy remains invisible. The endless emails, phone calls and so on cannot be quantified, and all that shows in the report is a couple of lines with the conclusion of all this invisible work. Notwithstanding, what does show in the report is already significantly impressive in its amount. For this I need to thank all the members of the Commission, including the secretary, and the chairpersons and members of the subcommittees. Without them all this work would not have been realised. Many of us have done this with personal sacrifice, dedicating time to Commission work which by right should have been dedicated to our families and our lives.

I am also aware that some of the issues we had hoped would be tackled and concluded before this year's end are in fact still pending. This is at times experienced as somewhat disheartening. However, we can honestly say that it was not for want of trying. As people keep reminding me, some things take time, even though we may experience them as urgent and important. I therefore look forward, with hope, to being able to report them as satisfactorily concluded in next year's report.

The Commission remains committed to working to improve the lives of those within our society who experience the scourge that is domestic violence, as well as to preventing others from getting caught up in it. We have many partners in this work, other stakeholders, service providers, pressure groups et cetera all of whom give their contribution with great commitment and dedication. To them too I must extend my thanks. Together we are stronger and together we will make change happen.

**Dr Marceline Naudi**  
Chairperson



## **1. Introduction**

The Commission on Domestic Violence was established under Article 3 of the Domestic Violence Act, Chapter 481 on the 1st March 2006<sup>1</sup>. The main role of the Commission is that of advising the Minister responsible for social policy on all aspects of Domestic Violence.

## **2. Definition**

In the Domestic Violence Act, ‘**domestic violence**’ is defined as any act of violence, even if only verbal, perpetrated by a household member upon another household member and includes any omission which causes physical or moral harm to the other.

## **3. Launch of the Commission**

The Commission was officially launched by the Minister for the Family and Social Solidarity, the Honourable Dolores Cristina, on Thursday 30<sup>th</sup> March 2006 and has now been operating for two years.

## **4. Terms of reference**

The terms of reference of the Commission on Domestic Violence are laid down under Article 4, of the said Domestic Violence Act. These are reproduced below.

“The Commission shall have the function of advising the Minister on all aspects of domestic violence and in particular on:

- (a) increasing the awareness and understanding of domestic violence and harassment and their consequences and on ways and means to reduce their incidence;
- (b) areas of domestic violence on which research is necessary or desirable;
- (c) strategies to expose domestic violence and to facilitate the intervention of public and private agencies and entities with respect to victims and perpetrators of such violence;
- (d) educating the public on all aspects of domestic violence;
- (e) ways to facilitate communication between public and private agencies and entities involved in action against domestic violence;
- (f) standards for care facilities for victims and perpetrators of domestic violence, including public or private shelter services or facilities;
- (g) standards and protocols for practitioners;

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<sup>1</sup> Law can be accessed on [www.domestiviolence.gov.mt](http://www.domestiviolence.gov.mt)

- (h) procedures for the effective co-ordination on a national level of the activities of public and private agencies and entities engaged in the giving of services on domestic violence issues including support services;
- (i) a comprehensive and co-ordinated plan for the collection of data concerning domestic violence for use by the courts, prosecutors, law enforcement officers, health care practitioners, social workers and other agencies and entities in a manner that protects the identity of victims of domestic violence;
- (j) developing a comprehensive plan for a multidisciplinary approach of active prevention and early intervention;
- (k) specialized training for professional groups involved; and
- (l) consulting and networking with other relevant national and international entities.”

## **5. Composition**

At its inception, the Commission was composed of a chairperson and seven members, all of whom brought with them specific expertise relevant to the issue of domestic violence, and included a member from Gozo to ensure reference to Gozo’s specific situation. The diverse expertise of the members spanned from direct hands-on experience to policy, service provision, planning and research.

The Commission started this year with the following members, all of whom were still present by the end of the year:

### **Chairperson**

Dr Marceline Naudi Ph.D(Manchester), M.A.(Bradford), B.A.

### **Members**

Ms Maria Attard M.A.T.C.

Mr Albert Bell BA (Gen.), BA (Hons.), MA

Insp Louise Calleja Dip in Mngt. Studies, (Reading an MBA)

Sr Joan Garner RGS. MQR.

Dr Roberta Lepre’ Camilleri B.A., LL.D

Mr Cornelius Mulvaney Dip.Family Therapy (UK); CQSW (UK)

The Commission is currently one member less than when originally constituted.

The Commission is also supported by Ms Doris Vassallo, DPA, who performs the functions of Secretary to the Commission.

## 6. Premises

In April 2007 the Commission was allocated premises in Block C Beltissebh Floriana. The premises consist of two rooms, one of which is to be used as a general office, and the other as a library which will be eventually open to the public, by appointment, for reference purposes. Since the allocation, the Commission has been working to furnish and equip the premises as necessary. Books and relevant documents are also being gathered for the Library. Once the initial start-up work is complete the Commission will officially launch the premises.

## 7. Commission Meetings

Between March 2007 and February 2008 the Commission met eleven times, as follows:

	<b>Date</b>	<b>Attendance</b>
Meeting 3/07:	Tuesday, 13 <sup>th</sup> March 2007	6/7
Meeting 4/07:	Tuesday, 10 <sup>th</sup> April 2007	6/7
Meeting 5/07:	Tuesday, 8 <sup>th</sup> May 2007	5/7
Meeting 6/07:	Tuesday, 12 <sup>th</sup> June 2007	6/7
Meeting 7/07:	Friday, 27 <sup>th</sup> July 2007	6/7
Meeting 8/07:	Tuesday, 18 <sup>th</sup> September 2007	6/7
Meeting 9/07:	Wednesday, 24 <sup>th</sup> October 2007	6/7
Meeting 10/07:	Wednesday, 14 <sup>th</sup> November 2007	5/7
Meeting 11/07:	Wednesday, 5 <sup>th</sup> December 2007	5/7
Meeting 1/08:	Wednesday 23 <sup>th</sup> January 2008	5/7
Meeting 2/08:	Monday 27 <sup>th</sup> February 2008	6/7

The duration of each meeting was approximately 2 to 3 hours.

The venue for the meetings was the Ministry for the Family and Social Solidarity in Valletta, to start with, and was then moved to the Commission's new premises in Block C Beltissebh Floriana except for one meeting which was held in Dar Guzeppa Debono in Gozo.

## 8. Finance

In January 2007, 9 months after its inception, the Commission was allocated its first budget of € 23,293.73 (Lm10,000) out of which the annual awarded honoraria of the Chairperson € 2,329.37 (Lm1,000) and the members of the Commission € 1,747.03 (Lm750) were paid. The majority of the remaining € 8,735.15 (Lm3,750) were utilized by the Commission for its various projects, including publicity events, contributions to shelters of items to improve the material quality of life of residents, and the refurbishment

of its newly allocated premises<sup>2</sup>. The Ministry for the Family and Social Solidarity committed itself to provide additional funds from other budgetary allocations, as and when necessary for any project that was deemed essential to the functions of the Commission.

In January 2008 the budget allocation increased substantially to € 47,000 (Lm 20,177.10) in recognition of the importance of the work being undertaken by the Commission.

## 9. Activities

Between March 2007 and February 2008, the Chairperson and members of the Commission were invited to attend and participate in a number of seminars, conferences and other activities, as listed hereunder. All the activities listed below were attended by at least one or more members, including the Secretary to the Commission. Members' participation in the various seminars enabled the Commission to raise its profile and emphasize the importance of Domestic Violence as an issue in Malta, as well as gather useful information, and enable networking with national and international entities.

- National Conference on EU Funding entitled 'Delivering tangible results – all the insight for the economic community' organised by Paragon Europe at the Corinthia Palace Hotel on Friday 23 March 2007.
- Meeting on Euro Changeover held in the courtyard of the Ministry for the Family and Social Solidarity on Tuesday 17 April 2007.
- Seminar entitled '*Nistharrgu Aspetti Differenti mill-Familji Maltin Illum*' organised by the National Commission for the Family at Centru Hidma Socjali, Sta Venera on Wednesday 18 April 2007.
- Seminar entitled 'Promotion of European Projects among NGOs and citizens' organised by Fondazzjoni Temi Zammit held on Friday 20 April 2007.
- Conference entitled 'Equality & Disability: the way forward' organised by National Commission for Persons with Disability and National Commission for the Promotion of Equality on Friday 20 April 2007 at InterContinental Malta, St Julians.
- National Conference entitled 'Ensuring Quality Childcare' organised by ETC on Friday 27 April 2007 at the Corinthia San Gorg, St Julians.
- Delegation of the European Union Women's Rights and Gender Equality Committee which visited Malta on 7 – 8 May 2007.

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<sup>2</sup> For financial report see appendix A

- Seminar on ‘World Awareness Day against Elder Abuse’ organized by the Working Group on Elder Abuse on Thursday 28 June, 2007 at St Vincent the Paul Residence, Luqa.
- Information sessions in relation to Cohesion Policy 2007-2013 organised the Managing Authority (PPCD) on Monday 06 August 2007.
- Information Session on the EU Structural Funds 2007-2013 organised by the Directorate Policy Development & Programme Implementation, within the Ministry for the Family and Social Solidarity on Friday 28 September 2007.
- Training sessions organized through the Mosaic project for the Year of Equal Opportunities on November 15, 2007 and November 22, 2007 at the Mediterranean Conference Centre.
- Think Tank – Involving Men in Gender Equality organized by the Employment and Training Corporation on Monday 19 November 2007.
- Round Table Seminar to discuss aspects of Family Policy organized by National Commission for the Family on Wednesday 19 December 2007.
- Breakfast meeting organized by the Ministry for the Family & Social Solidarity on Wednesday 16 January 2008.
- Launch of Drugs Policy on Friday 01 February, 2008 organised by the Ministry for Family & Social Solidarity.
- Seminar on ‘Diversity Management’ organized by the National Commission for the Promotion of Equality in collaboration with the Malta Employers’ Association on Tuesday 05 February 2008 at the Phoenicia, Floriana.
- Focus Group on Mental Health on Thursday 07 February, 2008 organised by the Directorate for Policy Development and Programme Implementation within the Ministry for the Family and Social Solidarity.
- Conference to mark the launch of the consultation process on the draft National Standards for Residential Child Care Policies and Procedures for Out-of-Home Child Care organised by the Department for Social Welfare Standards on Friday 15 February 2008 held at the Mediterranean Conference Centre, Valletta.
- Victim’s Day on Wednesday 20 February, 2008 organised by Victim Support Unit held in Marsa.
- The National Commission for the Promotion of Equality 4<sup>th</sup> Annual conference held at New Dolmen Hotel, Qawra on Wednesday 20 February, 2008.

- Focus Group on Domestic Violence on Wednesday 20 February, 2008 organised by the Directorate for Policy Development and Programme Implementation within the Ministry for the Family and Social Solidarity.

The Commission was also invited to a number of other conferences and seminars but was unfortunately unable to attend due to lack of human resources.

## **10. National Action Plan on Domestic Violence**

### **National Action Plan**

As suggested in last year's report the Commission looked to the Council of Europe blueprint for the campaign to combat violence against women, including domestic violence, as the major foundation for the development of Malta's National Action Plan for the sector<sup>3 4</sup>.

In the introduction of the blueprint several clear and bold statements are made which have been kept in mind by the Commission:

- Violence against women is the result of an imbalance of power between women and men, leading to serious discrimination against women, both within society and the family.
- Violence against women is a violation of human rights, the very nature of which deprives women of their ability to enjoy fundamental freedoms.
- Violence against women is a detriment to peace, security and democracy in Europe.

The blueprint then goes on to delineate four main areas of measures which would need to be considered: a. Legal and policy measures; b. Support and protection for victims; c. Data collection; d. Awareness raising. The Commission has been working more specifically on the latter three areas through the setting up of three Subcommittees.

#### **a. Legal and policy measures**

In the Council of Europe blueprint this area has several sub-headings, some of which are already in hand in Malta (e.g. protection orders; legal aid, psycho-social support, safety planning) and others of which we need to work on, including the monitoring and review

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<sup>3</sup> For full Council of Europe Blueprint access  
[http://www.coe.int/t/dg2/equality/domesticviolencecampaign/Blueprint\\_en.asp](http://www.coe.int/t/dg2/equality/domesticviolencecampaign/Blueprint_en.asp)

<sup>4</sup> For a full assessment of Malta's position in relation to the campaign as of June 2007, access  
[http://www.coe.int/t/dg2/equality/domesticviolencecampaign/Source/Proceedings\\_FocPtsConf\\_withCover.pdf](http://www.coe.int/t/dg2/equality/domesticviolencecampaign/Source/Proceedings_FocPtsConf_withCover.pdf)

of legislation and measures provided for by the law. Since our law has only been in place for two years this is something we hope to be able to tackle in the future.

b. Support and protection for victims

Once again, in the Council of Europe blueprint, there are several sub-headings under this measure, and once again, several of these are already in hand in Malta, whilst others require further work.

The Commission set up a Subcommittee on Service Development<sup>5</sup> with representatives of the main direct welfare service providers in the field of domestic violence, both public entities and NGO's, i.e. the various shelters, the Domestic Violence Services of Appogg (the designated agency) and the Gozitan Social work services. An ex-service user also sits on this Subcommittee.

This Subcommittee helps co-ordinate the various work of the direct service providers through sharing of information. Standards for the care facilities and also of the services given by the staff are being discussed with the intention of working on national standards which are acceptable to all parties. We have liaised with the Department of Social Welfare Standards and will be working with them on this. Information on opportunities for training and improvement of services through increasing resources (national and international) are also shared and discussed through this forum.

The work done through this Subcommittee meets several of the requirements of our terms of reference as per the Domestic Violence Act (2006):

- (c) strategies to expose domestic violence and to facilitate the intervention of public and private agencies and entities with respect to victims and perpetrators of such violence;
- (e) ways to facilitate communication between public and private agencies and entities involved in action against domestic violence;
- (f) standards for care facilities for victims and perpetrators of domestic violence, including public or private shelter services or facilities;
- (g) standards and protocols for practitioners;
- (h) procedures for the effective co-ordination on a national level of the activities of public and private agencies and entities engaged in the giving of services on domestic violence issues including support services;
- (k) specialized training for professional groups involved; and
- (l) consulting and networking with other relevant national and international entities.

c. Data collection

The following terms of reference of the Commission would fall under this heading:

- (b) areas of domestic violence on which research is necessary or desirable;

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<sup>5</sup> See appendix B for full report of activities and work done

- (i) a comprehensive and co-ordinated plan for the collection of data concerning domestic violence for use by the courts, prosecutors, law enforcement officers, health care practitioners, social workers and other agencies and entities in a manner that protects the identity of victims of domestic violence;
- (l) consulting and networking with other relevant national and international entities.

The Commission has set up a Subcommittee on Research and Data Collation<sup>6</sup>. The various entities that touch with people who are experiencing or escaping domestic violence are represented on this Subcommittee through their research/statistics personnel. These include representatives from the Law Courts, Health, Foundation for Social Welfare Services, National Statistics Office and others.

The Subcommittee is looking at ways in which statistics currently gathered by the different entities could be standardised to provide a better picture of those seeking help. The replication of a 2003 study commissioned by the then Ministry for Social Policy titled "*Domestic Violence against Women: Perceptions of the Maltese General Public*" to the NSO and the undertaking of service evaluation studies are also being prioritised by the Commission for the medium term. Another big task being undertaken is that of a prevalence survey for the Maltese islands in order to get a better idea of not only those that report incidences, but also those that do not. This is needed in order to better plan policy and provision of services.

d. Awareness raising

The following terms of reference of the Commission would fall under this heading:

- (a) increasing the awareness and understanding of domestic violence and harassment and their consequences and on ways and means to reduce their incidence;
- (d) educating the public on all aspects of domestic violence;
- (e) ways to facilitate communication between public and private agencies and entities involved in action against domestic violence;
- (l) consulting and networking with other relevant national and international entities.

The Commission set up a Subcommittee for a National Publicity Campaign to plan and co-ordinate media events on domestic violence based on a two-year period<sup>7</sup>. Public relations personnel from the Foundation for Social Welfare Services and the Ministry for Family and Social Solidarity sit on this Subcommittee together with two Commission members. This helps in dovetailing of activities, reducing duplication and increasing cooperation between these main entities. One of the factors continuously considered is to try to ensure that the current services are not swamped with referrals as a result of the publicity.

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<sup>6</sup> See appendix C for full report of activities

<sup>7</sup> See appendix D for full report on activities



The Blueprint once again makes some bold statements in its concluding message which are similarly considered by the Commission in its work:

- Combating domestic violence calls for joint public action.
- Domestic violence is a human rights violation.
- Domestic violence seriously injures women and damages the whole of society, including future generations.
- Domestic violence calls for men's active participation to combat violence against women.

## 11. Awareness-raising

Raising awareness on domestic violence and its effects remains an important part of the Commission's work. Notwithstanding the amount of work done in this area over the last year, as seen below, one still encounters people from all walks of life who suggest that we need to increase this aspect. This will therefore continue to be a priority.

### 11.1 Awareness Raising and Collaboration: Professionals and Other Stakeholders

As envisaged in last year's report, the Commission entered into further correspondence and meetings, where appropriate, with various stakeholders.

These included:

- A meeting was held on 02 April 2007 with Ms Grace Attard (Vice-President) and Ms Doris Bingley (Secretary), representatives of the **National Council of Women**. Points discussed and agreed upon included the importance of monitoring the existing legislation over the next few years so as to identify any loopholes and weaknesses that may exist. Where necessary, the law should be amended, so as to be of greater benefit to those experiencing domestic violence as well as the rest of society. The need for public awareness and responsibility in society in general was also discussed, and that third party reporting of domestic violence is now possible and to be recommended. The NCW pledged support to the Commission and its work as well as practical help where appropriate.
- A meeting was held on 16 April 2007 with Dr Janet Mifsud (Commissioner) and Ms Sina Bugeja (Chief Executive Officer), representatives of the **National Commission for the Promotion of Equality**. The representatives acknowledged the common areas of interest and agreed to collaborate with the Commission on issues of domestic violence especially by forwarding any relevant documents related to the issue. Since NCPE were working on an EU Project ESF 46 the Commission on Domestic Violence had forwarded a letter in relation to the review of Maltese laws that may hinder the process of combating domestic violence.

- A meeting was held on 16 April 2007 with Mr Sandro Spiteri (Chairperson) and Ms Joyce Sciberras (Member), as representatives of the **National Commission for the Family**. The representatives mentioned that one of the projects, they had undertaken includes the Family Policy which should be ready by end of May 2007. Points discussed included that of mediators and the need for a formal protocol on how to proceed in cases of domestic violence. It was further suggested that a person who has experienced domestic violence at the hands of the spouse should be allowed to present an ‘affidavit’ instead of appearing for the mediation session, thus avoiding contact with the perpetrator.
- A meeting was held on 30 April 2007 with Mr Joe Camilleri (Chairperson) and Mr Alfred Bezzina (Secretary), representatives of the **National Commission for Persons with Disability**. It was acknowledged that disabled people are particularly vulnerable to issues of abuse and should therefore be included when considering domestic violence issues. It was further agreed that when training on domestic violence issues and awareness raising campaigns are organised, care should be taken to ensure that any venues are fully accessible, and that any information distributed is available in various formats/mediums to ensure accessibility to all disabled persons. It was further suggested that domestic violence cases involving disabled people should be dealt with by domestic violence social workers who would consult social workers working with disabled persons where necessary, in order for them to provide the necessary resources.
- A meeting was held on 14 May 2007 with Ms Therese Micallef, Social Inclusion Officer, at the **Policy Development & Programme Implementation Directorate**. Points discussed included ways and means of tapping EU funds through projects available under various programmes provided by the European Union. The importance of networking between institutions was emphasised. Ms Micallef agreed to raise this at the next Progress meeting that ideally meetings are held together for all entities concerned. These meetings could be the basis for the formulation of projects when formal calls are out. This will also encourage entities to forward joint proposals for a particular project.
- A meeting was held on 11 June 2007 with Ms Anna Borg (Chairperson) and Ms Renee Laiviera (MCWO representative on European Women’s Lobby), representatives of the **Malta Confederation of Women’s Organisations**. Points discussed included the importance of politicians being brought on board. MCWO further pledged full co-operation to the Commission, especially since they are members in the Europeans Women’s Lobby and can liaise with them on the provision of foreigners specialized in the area who may be able to help in training.
- A meeting was held with the **Department of Social Welfare Standards** on 17 September 2007, with Dr Kenneth Grech, Director, Ms Frances Mallia and Ms Maryanne Muscat Azzopardi. It was suggested that representatives from the

Department could attend a meeting of the Subcommittee on Service Development to discuss the issues involved in setting up standards of practice. This will enable the two entities to work together for a common achievement. Dr Grech suggested that a separate working group be set up so that it will not get involved in the other issues discussed by the subcommittee. Dr Kenneth Grech pointed out that the joint committee could bring together all stakeholders involved and that the Ministry would be informed.

- A meeting was held on 17 September 2007 with Prof Richard Muscat (Chairperson), Ms Anna Girard (Focal Point) and Ms Paula Herbert as representatives of the **National Commission on Drugs, Alcohol and Other Substances**. Common areas were acknowledged and it was agreed that items included in the draft Drugs Policy relate to the domestic violence field. Advice was offered as a result of their own experience in the standardising of data.
- A meeting was held on 24 September 2007 with Ms Michelle Mallia (President, MNPN), Dr Paula Mifsud Bonnici and Dr Shirley Farrugia, representatives from the **Nationalist Party**. The points discussed included the role of medical doctors in the reporting and prosecution of domestic violence cases, and the suggestion that the Law Courts could accept an ‘affidavit’ signed by the doctor concerned. The setting up of a network of the direct services available was also suggested in order to facilitate a coordinated service. It was further agreed that more resources are needed for the perpetrators’ service considering that the law now includes the possibility of a treatment order on conviction and the possibility of a perpetrator being referred to the programme by the Court on a voluntary basis at the first appearance.
- A meeting was held on 24 September 2007 with The Hon Helena Dalli, as the representative of the **Malta Labour Party**. Points discussed included the importance of therapy for prisoners to prevent further perpetration of violence, and the provision of adequate numbers of social workers and psychologists to help people who have experienced not only physical but also emotional abuse. Measures to increase the uptake of these courses at University level were also considered.
- A meeting was held on 8 October 2007 with Dr Harry Vassallo (Party Leader), Ms Vikki Attard and Mr Victor Galea (Executive Secretary), representatives from **Alternativa Demokratika**. It was suggested that judgements of domestic violence cases should be forwarded to the Commission and then it could give its feedback through the Ministry of Justice and Home Affairs and that guidelines should be formulated for police officers, doctors and priests.
- A meeting was held on 15 October 2007 with Dr Edward Gatt, Vice President **Chamber of Advocates**, Dr Stefan Camilleri and Ms Dorothy Ciantar. It was agreed that a joint seminar/workshop would be organised on the issue of domestic violence, with the participation of the judiciary, advocates, mediators and the

police. The importance of expediting social work court reports was emphasised as well as the issue of payment for them.

- Various meetings were held between the Chairperson and Ms Claire Azzopardi from **Amnesty International Malta** in respect of a research programme they had undertaken on domestic violence in Malta.

### **11.1.1 Presentations**

The Chairperson was invited by Ms Maryanne Gauci, Family and Adult Service Manager, Agenzija Appogg to give a presentation to the Service Area Leaders at Agenzija Appogg on 10 April 2007, in relation to the Council of Europe campaign to combat violence against women, including domestic violence.

The Commission was further invited by the Council of Europe to give two presentations on the situation in Malta in relation to Domestic Violence. These were at the Conference for National Focal Points organised by the Council of Europe in Strasbourg 4-5 June 2007<sup>8</sup> and the Seminar on Data Collection as a prerequisite for effective policies to combat violence against women, including domestic violence organised by the Council of Europe in Lisbon on the 5 July 2007<sup>9</sup>. These presentations helped to raise awareness about Malta's situation and activities within the Council of Europe in these respects.

### **11.1.2 Communicating with Judiciary**

The Commission has persevered in its endeavours to meet with the Judiciary to enable it to discuss important issues that are being raised both by frontline workers and by service users. To date a response is being awaited to a letter written to the Commission for the Administration of Justice delineating the areas of concern. The same areas have been raised with the Parliamentary Secretary within the Ministry for Justice and Home Affairs and a meeting with the Chief Justice has been suggested.

## **11.2 Awareness raising: General public**

Once the Commission felt better established, participation in media events increased. A two-year publicity Campaign was planned and a Subcommittee set up to implement it<sup>10</sup>,

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<sup>8</sup> Naudi, M. 2007 "Development at national level: national campaigns within the framework of the Council of Europe Campaign to combat violence against women, including domestic violence - "Application of Council of Europe Blueprint to Malta". Pp.50-53 in Proceedings of the Conference of National Focal Points and Contact Parliamentarians. Strasbourg. 4-5 June 2007. Directorate General of Human Rights and Legal Affairs: Council of Europe.

<sup>9</sup> Bell, A. 2008. "Data Collection Practices in relation to Domestic Violence in Malta: A Preliminary Analysis". Pp.99-100 in Proceedings of the Regional Seminar: Data Collection as a Prerequisite for Effective Policies to Combat Violence against Women, Lisbon, Portugal 5 July 2007. Directorate General of Human Rights and Legal Affairs: Council of Europe.

<sup>10</sup> See appendix D for a full report on the Subcommittees activities .

as stated above. This included members of the Commission appearing a total of thirteen times on national television or radio in the year under review, as well as seven articles published in the English and Maltese language press<sup>11</sup>. The Subcommittee also organised a Bus Shelter Campaign, in collaboration with the Local Councils Association, a Malta White Ribbon Campaign, in collaboration with the Foundation for Social Welfare Services, and a drawing competition in Schools, in collaboration with the Democracy and Values Education Section within the Education Division. Reportage of these activities appeared in the media through press releases and press coverage.

### 11.3 Website

The Commission's website [www.domesticviolence.gov.mt](http://www.domesticviolence.gov.mt) was set up in June 2007 as part of the Ministry's website. The information on the website includes information on the Commission and its activities as well as on the Domestic Violence Act. It further contains links to websites of other organizations who deal with cases of domestic violence.

### 11.4 Logo



After following the usual procedure the Commission now has its own logo which helps to promote its identity and the work that it undertakes. The logo was selected on the basis that it best represents the Commission's remit.

## 12. Service and Policy Development – a grass roots orientation

### 12.1 Meetings with the Designated Agency responsible for the provision of preventive, therapeutic and, or treatment programmes for persons experiencing domestic violence and perpetrators of domestic violence.

The Commission continued to liaise closely with Agenzija Appogg throughout this past year. Various meetings were held, on 2 April 2007, 21 June 2007, 28 June 2007, 27 July 2007 and 26 September 2007, between the Chair of the Commission and Ms Maryanne Gauci, Adult & Family Service Manager, Agenzija Appogg to discuss issues raised and ways of furthering collaboration between the Commission and Agenzija Appogg. Issues discussed included:

- Discussion of Action Plan.

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<sup>11</sup> To view articles access [www.domesticviolence.gov.mt](http://www.domesticviolence.gov.mt)

- Representation of the Foundation for Social Welfare Services in the various sub-committees.
- Collaboration on the White Ribbon Campaign.
- The need for more social workers in the Domestic Violence Unit of Agenzija Appogg.
- The problem of publicity resulting in the possibility of services being swamped.
- Writing the required reports for the Council of Europe Campaign to combat Violence against Women, including Domestic Violence.
- Test-case for third party reporting to police.
- Other activities that could be organised to raise public awareness on the issue of domestic violence.

## **12.2 Familiarisation Visits to the Shelters**

The members of the Commission were invited to the various shelters to familiarise themselves with the services offered and to discuss issues of concern raised by the workers.

The visits were as follows:

- Ghabex – 02 July 2007
- Dar Qalb ta' Gesu' – 11 July 2007
- Dar Carolina – 11 September 2007
- Dar Tereza Spinelli – 26 September 2007

Issues raised included:

- The standards of practice in the Shelters.
- The fear experienced by women when they have to appear in Court, and the importance of police escort for certain cases.
- The lack of weight given by the Court to a professional assessment by the social workers.
- The suggestion that video conferencing can be used for the women to give evidence in certain cases. The request has to be forwarded to the Magistrate by the Police.
- The problem of Magistrates insisting on social workers giving their personal details as opposed to the Agency detail in Court, where the perpetrator is present, even though they will be witnessing in their professional capacity.
- The problem of the police insisting that social workers provide their personal details as opposed to the Agency details on filing a report, knowing that the perpetrator has access to the report.
- The problem of the length of time a court case takes to be heard leading to frustration not only for the women but also for the social workers. The rulings on care, custody and maintenance take quite a long time to be issued and it is of detriment of the children, especially where a woman has had to flee the

matrimonial home leaving the children behind. Part of the reason for this is requests by the Magistrates for further mediation sessions. The social workers feel that there should be guidelines on how to proceed in such cases.

- The problem of occasional lack of co-operation from social workers employed in other entities.
- The problems encountered by women in receiving the legally agreed maintenance.
- The need for more social workers.
- The difficulty in getting psychological services for their residents, due to long waiting lists caused by lack of human resources.

### **12.3 Participation in the Compilation of the National Action Plan on Social Inclusion**

The Directorate for Policy Development and Programme Implementation within the Ministry for Social Policy is organising a series of Focus Group half day seminars for the vulnerable groups identified in the National Action Plan on Social Inclusion (2006-2008) in order to be able to compile the forthcoming NAP. The Chair participated in the focus groups held in February 2008 on Mental Health (7/2/08) and on Domestic Violence (20/2/08). The Commission will continue to be represented and actively participate in the forthcoming focus groups on Irregular Migration (5/3/08); Children and Youth (26/3/08); Older Persons (9/4/08); Addictive Behaviour (30/4/08); and Disability (7/5/08). The issue of domestic violence touches with each of these other areas and it is important that this is acknowledged and included in the NAP on Social Inclusion.

### **12.4 Meeting with His Excellency Mgr Pawlu Cremona, Archbishop of Malta**

The Commission is aware of the strength of influence of the Catholic Church in Malta and therefore the importance of working closely with the Church. The Church continues to provide help and support, material as well as emotional and spiritual, to persons experiencing or escaping domestic violence. Following the consecration of the new Archbishop therefore, the Commission requested a meeting to enable it to discuss areas of concern and of possible collaboration in the fight against domestic violence. A meeting was held on 06 July 2007 at the Archbishop's Curia in Floriana and several areas of collaboration were agreed upon. These included that the issue of domestic violence be discussed with Parish Priests, through the College of Chaplains, and with seminarians, as well as presented on religious media programmes such as *Qalb in Nies*. Other suggestions included that talks on this issue could be included in the programme of lectures to couples preparing for marriages. The issue of teenage perpetrators was also discussed. Present for the meeting were His Excellency Mgr Pawlu Cremona, Dr Marceline Naudi (Chairperson), Ms Maria Attard, Sr Joan Garner, Dr Roberta Lepre' Camilleri (Commission members) and Ms Doris Vassallo (Secretary).

### **12.5 Liaison with the Domestic Violence Worker's forum**

Apart from the Subcommittee on Service Development the Commission also liaises regularly with the domestic violence worker's forum which includes all the social worker's employed in the sector, as well as representatives of the various shelters. The Chair of the Commission attends the forum's meetings in a personal capacity and relays information.

### **12.6 Liaison with the Police Commissioner on Police guidelines for dealing with reports on domestic violence**

The Commissioner for Police issued an internal memo to all serving police officers with guidelines on dealing with reports on domestic violence. The Commission corresponded with the Commissioner of Police over the guidelines and obtained permission for copies to be circulated to the managers and the workers in the field of domestic violence. The Commission further requested and was granted a copy of the report of the proceedings of an international CEPOL conference on domestic violence which was held in Malta on 17-19 April 2007.

## **13. EU and International Projects**

### **13.1 European Social Fund**

An application for the project 'Dignity for Domestic Violence Survivors' under the Cohesion Policy 2007-2013 Operational Programme II, Priority Axis III Empowering People for More Jobs and a Better Quality of Life, has been put in by the Commission as the lead partner with the cooperation of several other organisations. Should this bid be successful the Commission hopes to use the funds to continue its work in the area. The project includes:

- Prevalence Study – to achieve an indication of the actual prevalence of domestic violence and the existence or otherwise of a link between domestic violence and non-employment.
- Study visit – to learn how other shelters for victims of domestic violence in European countries empower their residents and promote social inclusion through employment and self-employment, including through the setting up of co-operatives in their operations.
- Development of standards for shelters to include provision for inclusion of victims of domestic violence within labour market.
- Development of co-ordination plans including protocols for sectors involved in domestic violence including:
  - police
  - media
  - government entities
  - health service providers



- NGO's – to work in a coordinated manner to promote inclusion of domestic violence victims in labour market
- Media awareness campaign in relation to domestic violence and importance of labour market participation for victims of domestic violence

### **13.2 Daphne III Programme, 2007-2013**

As Malta's representative for the Daphne III project, the Chair of the Commission attended a meeting in Brussels on 7 September 2007 and put forward Malta's position as instructed by the Directorate of the European Union and International Affairs within the Ministry for the Family and Social Solidarity. The Daphne Programme is aimed to prevent and combat violence against children, young people and women and to protect persons experiencing violence and groups at risk. Daphne III is part of a general programme 'Fundamental Rights and Justice', and is a continuation of the policies and objectives laid down in Daphne I and Daphne II programmes. The objectives of the programme are aimed at preventing and fighting all forms of violence including sexual exploitation and trafficking in human beings, occurring in the public and private domain. On the Chair's return a meeting was organised with various interested entities so that information on applying for Daphne funds could be shared. Now that the call for applications is officially out, ongoing meetings are considering the possibility of the submission of a joint application for funds to cover a project which would involve training of staff working in the field, exchange visits etc.

### **13.3 Grundtvig 3**

The Director (EU and International Affairs), from the Ministry for the Family and Social Solidarity informed the Commission about a request they had received from 'Centro Studi Il Perugino', Italy enabling social workers to apply for EU funding under Grundtvig 3 to attend training sessions on domestic violence as part of a project entitled 'Acting on the Background for a higher Climbing up of Women Survivors of Violence.' The Commission forwarded the information to shelters and social workers who deal with cases of domestic violence and encouraged them to attend. One social worker from the Domestic Violence Unit, Agenzija Appogg will be attending in June 2008.

### **13.4 Council of Europe Campaign**

The Commission was represented at various conferences organized by the Council of Europe Campaign to combat violence against women, including domestic violence.

**13.4.1** As the appointed High Level Official, the Chairperson attended a **Joint Conference of National Focal Points and Contact Parliamentarians** in Strasbourg

France on 4 and 5 June 2007. She presented a paper on the application of the Campaign Blueprint to Malta<sup>12</sup>.

**13.4.2** The Commission was represented at a Conference on **Data collection as a prerequisite for effective policies to combat violence against women, including domestic violence** in Lisbon, Portugal on 5 July 2007, by Commission member Mr Albert Bell as the designated chair of the Subcommittee on Research and Data Collation. He gave a presentation on the situation in Malta in relation to research in the sector<sup>13</sup>. The Commission further negotiated the attendance of two other representatives from Malta, one from the Foundation for Social Welfare Services and the other from the National Statistics Office, so that they would be able to use the knowledge and experience gained through the Conference within the Subcommittee on Research and Data Collation.

**13.4.3** The Commission negotiated the attendance of two representatives of NGO's working in the field of domestic violence service provision at a **Conference on Support Services for Women Victims of Violence** in Strasbourg, France on 6 and 7 December 2007. On their return they shared their experiences and wrote a report for the Commission.

**13.4.4** The Chair of the Commission prepared a report, together with the appointed Focal Point for the Campaign, Ms Maryanne Gauci, as requested by the Council of Europe, to mark progress at the half-way stage of the Campaign. Collaboration over the writing of the final report is ongoing.

**13.4.5** The Commission raised the issue of Malta lacking a parliamentary representative to the Council of Europe Campaign to combat violence against women, including domestic violence, and worked hard to ensure that a representative was appointed. A representative was appointed early this year, however due to the forthcoming general elections a new representative will have to be appointed once parliament reconvenes.

### **13.5 UN Questionnaire on CCPCJ ECOSOC Resolution on Responses to violence against women 2006/29**

The Questionnaire was forwarded to the Commission by Mr Gerald Farrugia, 2nd Secretary in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on behalf of the Malta's Embassy in Geneva. The questions dealt with Malta's position in relation to crime prevention and criminal justice responses to violence against women and girls. It was duly filled in.

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<sup>12</sup> For full paper please access

[http://www.coe.int/t/dg2/equality/domesticviolencecampaign/Source/Proceedings\\_FocPtsConf\\_withCover.pdf](http://www.coe.int/t/dg2/equality/domesticviolencecampaign/Source/Proceedings_FocPtsConf_withCover.pdf)

<sup>13</sup> For full paper please access

[http://www.coe.int/t/dg2/equality/domesticviolencecampaign/Regional\\_seminars/EG-VAW-SEM3.pdf](http://www.coe.int/t/dg2/equality/domesticviolencecampaign/Regional_seminars/EG-VAW-SEM3.pdf)

### **13.6 WHO Questionnaire**

The WHO Regional Committee for Europe adopted a Resolution on the Prevention of injuries in September, 2005 (EUR/RC55/R9) and consequently requests country updates. Responses to the questions relevant to the Commission were given in a questionnaire, in collaboration with Dr T. Firman Tilney as the WHO focal point on the part of the Department of Health.

### **13.7 Council of Europe Questionnaires**

**13.7.1** The questionnaire ‘Revised Monitoring Framework on Implementation of Recommendation Rec(2002)5 on the Protection of Women against Violence’ was forwarded to the Commission by Ms Sina Bugeja, Malta’s representative on the Council of Europe gender equality committee. The questionnaire was duly filled in.

**13.7.2** Another questionnaire was forwarded to the Commission by the Committee on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men on ‘Parliaments united in combating domestic violence against women’: follow-up to Resolution 1582 (2007). This questionnaire provides the Committee with Malta’s progress report on the implementation of the priority measures identified by the Parliamentary Assembly (paragraph 6.6 of Resolution 1582 (2007)) and on the awareness-raising and other events organised by national parliaments as part of the Council of Europe Campaign ‘Stop domestic violence against women’. This was duly filled in.

## **14. Research and Statistics**

The issue of relevant data and statistics, as stated elsewhere, remains a priority for the Commission. The preliminary work of the Subcommittee on Research and Data Collation<sup>14</sup> has started and networking between the various stakeholders is taking place. Assuming availability of resources, the Subcommittee will soon start producing more tangible fruit.

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<sup>14</sup>See appendix C for full report on Subcommittee’s activities .

## **15. Conclusion**

During the Commission's second year of existence, notwithstanding being one member down, we have attempted to start building on the foundations that had been laid down in our first year of existence. The Commission has continued to strengthen relationships and widened its networks to enable better cooperation with the various stakeholders. The Commission's 'extended family' has grown with the setting up of three Subcommittees consisting of a total of sixteen additional people, all committed to giving of their time and energy to improving the lives of people experiencing or escaping domestic violence.

The members have participated actively in various seminars and media publicity to continue raising public awareness on the devastating effects of domestic violence, and this must continue to be one of our priorities. Another equally important priority must be to continue working on the standardisation of statistics, and a prevalence survey, to enable us to get a better evidence-based picture of the situation in Malta. Our third priority for the coming year will hopefully be continuing to work on the setting of standards for services, and this must include increasing staff levels where indicated. The Commission shall also work to achieve further headway in its links with the Judiciary.

We end the year with a few other pending issues which will have to be taken up again next year. These include, as mentioned above, increase in human resources within the designated agency in relation to domestic violence social workers; additional administrative help for the Commission to enable it to carry out its work; and the appointment of a further commission member to achieve the full complement of members.

This year has closed and the next year beckons.

# **Appendix**



## Appendix A

## Financial Report

**Breakdown of Item 5477**  
**Domestic Violence Commission**  
**up to and including 31.12.07**

<b>Budget</b>	<b>Lm</b>	<b>c</b>	<b>€</b>	<b>c</b>
	<b>10,000.00</b>		<b>23,293.73</b>	
<b><u>Details</u></b>	<b><u>Amount paid</u></b>		<b><u>Amount paid</u></b>	
	Lm	c	€	c
Campaign	710.37		1,654.72	
Donation	2,088.50		4,864.90	
Honoraria re 2006	4,770.83		11,113.04	
Library	776.05		1,807.71	
Refurbishment of premises	1,117.14		2,602.24	
Stationery		55	128.12	
Miscellaneous	221.45		515.84	
			9,739.34	22,686.56
			<hr/>	<hr/>
<b>Balance left</b>			<b>260.66</b>	<b>607.17</b>





## **Appendix B**

### **Commission on Domestic Violence**

#### **Subcommittee on Service Development**

#### **Terms of Reference**

#### **Preamble:**

The Commission on Domestic Violence acknowledges the existing forum for domestic violence workers that meets on an on-going basis to discuss issues which arise in the field and map out responses to the challenges encountered by service users and field workers alike. The Commission recognises the value of the Domestic Violence Forum to the sector's development. The Subcommittee on Service Development is not intended to replace or duplicate the work of the said Forum.

#### **Functions:**

1. To ensure ongoing liaison and effective two-way communication between the Commission and the field.
2. To advise the Commission on measures aimed at the monitoring and safeguarding of standards of practice in the field.
3. To further facilitate networking between practitioners in the field and on a broader level, to enhance dialogue and exchange between practitioners in the domestic violence sector and other practitioners in related spheres.
4. To channel concerns and interests of service users to the Commission.
5. To ensure that service users are appropriately consulted and represented in policy and service development proposals advocated by the Commission.
6. To advise the Commission on research and training needs pertinent to the domestic violence sector.

## **Constitution:**

### Chairperson:

- Nominated by the Commission on Domestic Violence. Ideally, the nominee should possess the requisite social work experience.

### Members:

- Commission on Domestic Violence member. As above, ideally, the nominee should possess the requisite social work experience.
- Agenzija Appogg (Foundation for Social Welfare Services) staff member. The nominee should be presently responsible for the management of the Domestic Violence Services.
- Agenzija Appogg (Foundation for Social Welfare Services) Domestic Violence Service staff member.
- A practitioner in the field nominated by the Ministry for Gozo.
- A present or former service user.
- NGO practitioner in the sector
- NGO practitioner in the sector
- NGO practitioner in the sector

## **Meetings/logistics/reports:**

- The Subcommittee may be convened whenever agreed upon by the members as necessary, however, at least once on a quarterly basis.
- The Subcommittee will regulate itself on quorums and other proceedings.
- Administrative support, if necessary, shall be provided by the Commission on Domestic Violence.
- Recommendations by the Subcommittee to the Commission must be made in writing.
- The Chairperson (Subcommittee) is expected to present progress reports (verbal and/or in writing) to the Commission on an on-going basis.

**Commission on Domestic Violence  
Subcommittee on Service Development**

**Annual Report March 07-March 08**

Cornelius Mulvaney Dip. Family Therapy (London); CQSW (UK)

The Commission on Domestic Violence had agreed at its meeting of the 16 January 2007 to set up the Subcommittee on Service Development consisting of two members of the Commission with the rest from areas connected with relevant services. This Subcommittee's terms of reference covered two functions of the Commission, namely, 'standards of practice' and 'facilitating networking between practitioners in the field'.

This Subcommittee is made up of the following members:

Dr Marceline Naudi (Commission on Domestic Violence) - Chairperson

Ms Caroline Azzopardi (Dar Qalb ta' Gesu')

Ms Doreen Camilleri (Service Area Leader DVS, Appogg)

Ms Sandra Falzon (Former Service User)

Mr Cornelius Mulvaney (Commission on Domestic Violence)

Mr Peter Paul Portelli (Centru Hidma Soċjali, Gozo)

Ms Josepha Xerri (Dar Tereza Spinelli)

Ms Pamela Demicoli (Dar Merhba Bik)

Ms Doris Vassallo (Secretary)

It met five times on 20 March 2007, 22 May 2007, 24 July 2007, 11 September 2007, 13 November 2007 and 15 January 2008, at a frequency of a two hour meeting every two months, with one of the meetings held in Gozo.

The meetings produced various challenging issues touching the field of domestic violence at ground level, throwing light for example, on the lack of several resources in Gozo.

The representatives discussed and worked upon various issues related to standards of practice and networking, including the following:

**a. Standards of practice**

- The need for a support system for staff working in the field where one could air out the views related to methods of work, and how one is affected by the nature of the work.

- How persons suffering abuse are made more aware of the existent services in their aid, and how and where they could take shelter in case of emergency, as well as how the Law related to Domestic Violence could be made more understandable to these persons.
- A shortage of staff resulting in not being able to confront an increase of cases thus reducing their standard of service to those seeking help.
- The need for more trained people in the field to work with perpetrators.
- The setting up of a specialized unit in the Police Vice Squad to enable police and social workers to work more closely together.
- The lack of weight given by lawyers in Court to reports done by social workers.
- Care facilities were discussed and analysed in the context of needs and in the context of EU standards. In this respect there were visits to the various Shelters in Malta and Gozo and presentations were given on each one with the view to understand what was needed further to make them amenable to EU standards, with special attention to safety, protection, children and support.
- Improving facilities in the Shelters.
- Working on presentations of each Shelter.
- Making the Law governing Domestic Violence more user-friendly.
- Learning from the Department for Social Welfare Standards on the establishment of the Standards for Child Care Centres and Residential Care for Children and to see how these could be tailored to set up such standards on Domestic Violence.

**b. Networking between practitioners**

- The difficulty in finding full co-operation from other practitioners who deal with domestic violence cases, such as the police, lawyers, psychiatrists and general medical practitioners.
- Court matters, manners and systems.
- Channeling concerns and interests of service users to the Commission.
- Increasing networking as a result of visits done to all the Shelters in Malta and Gozo.

**c. Recommendations**

- Writing of articles on the subject from various members to appear in the local media as part of the Commission's Campaign.
- Interviews with women suggested to obtain views of what women go through when caught in domestic violence, obtaining narratives from women who have

been abused, with the view to look into the nature of the abuse and the hard road that women usually have to go through in order to seek justice.

- For the representatives of the Shelters to reflect on and write on standards of practice in their homes.
- Working on common standards involving Shelters.
- Encouraging a positive attitude of working together.



## **Appendix C**

### **Commission on Domestic Violence**

#### **Subcommittee on Research and Data Collation**

##### **Terms of Reference**

###### **Preamble:**

By virtue of the Domestic Violence Act 2006, the Commission on Domestic Violence is to advise the Minister on all aspects of domestic violence including the issue of research and data collation. The Commission acknowledges the importance of having research available that enables a more complete picture of the local situation with regards to domestic violence. To this end, this Subcommittee is being set up to focus on this specific aspect of domestic violence.

###### **Functions:**

1. To identify areas of domestic violence on which research is necessary and desirable.
2. To index/register the existing local research in domestic violence.
3. To identify gaps and attempt to find ways of addressing them.
4. To create and develop a comprehensive and co-ordinated plan for the collation of data concerning domestic violence, and use a methodology that allows for gender analysis and comparison with other member states of the Council of Europe, EU members and other international organisations. This should include the systematic collection of statistical data disaggregated by sex, by type of violence as well as by the relationship of the perpetrator to the victim in all fields (in liaison with NSO). It should also include collection and dissemination of good practices for preventing violence occurring in the family or domestic unit, protecting its victims and prosecuting the perpetrators.
5. To make data available for the use of the Commission, the courts, prosecutors, social workers and other agencies and entities in a manner that protects the identity of victims of domestic violence.
6. Liaise with other relevant national and international entities to facilitate the implementation of its functions.

## **Constitution:**

### Chairperson:

- Nominated by the Commission on Domestic Violence. Ideally, the nominee will possess the requisite research knowledge and experience.

### Members:

- Commission on Domestic Violence member. As above, ideally, the nominee should possess the requisite research knowledge and experience.
- Foundation for Social Welfare Services staff member. The nominee should be presently responsible for the research element of the Foundation.
- Representative from the National Statistics Office
- Representative from the Ministry for the Family and Social Solidarity
- Representative from Information Management Unit, MFSS in relation to software development
- Representative from the Police Force with regards to recording of incidences
- Representative from the Health Sector
- Representative from the Ministry of Justice and Home Affairs

## **Meetings/logistics/reports:**

- The Subcommittee may be convened whenever agreed upon by the members as necessary, however, at least once on a quarterly basis.
- The Subcommittee will regulate itself on quorums and other proceedings.
- Administrative support, if necessary, shall be provided by the Commission on Domestic Violence.
- Recommendations by the Subcommittee to the Commission must be made in writing.
- The Chairperson (Subcommittee) is expected to present progress reports (verbal and/or in writing) to the Commission on an on-going basis.



**Commission on Domestic Violence  
Subcommittee on Research and Data Collation****Annual Report March 07-March 08**

Albert Bell BA (Gen), BA (Hons), MA

The Subcommittee on Research and Data Collation was set-up in September 2007, with the primary objective of standardising data collation efforts in the sector, and moreover, to carve and identify pathways for the development of a scientific knowledge base that informs both service provision and the formulation and implementation of policies concerning domestic violence. The Subcommittee is comprised of the following members:

Mr Albert Bell – (Commission on Domestic Violence) – Chairperson

Dr Marceline Naudi – (Commission on Domestic Violence)

Dr Maja Miljanic Brinkworth (MSP)

Ms Joslyn Magro Cuschieri (NSO)

Insp. Trevor Sammut (Malta Police)

Ms Christine Marchand Agius (FSWS)

Mr Massimo Vella (IMU, MSP)

Dr Maria Dalmas (MHEC)

Mr Francis Xavier Mangion (Courts of Justice)

Ms Doris Vassallo (Secretary)

The multi-disciplinary and cross-departmental constitution of the Subcommittee reflects the commitment of various stakeholders toward the rationalisation of present domestic violence data collation practices and the development of a coherent, concerted and multi-pronged data collection strategy in the sector.

The Subcommittee convened four times since its inception on the following dates: Thursday, September 20<sup>th</sup> 2007, Friday, 19<sup>th</sup> October 2007, Tuesday, 11<sup>th</sup> December 2007 and Friday, 1<sup>st</sup> February 2008. Each meeting extended to approximately two hours. The venues for the meetings alternated between the IMU boardroom and the IMU Training Centre at the Ministry for the Family and Social Solidarity (MFSS) and the Commission's new premises at Beltissebh, Floriana.

The first two meetings of the Subcommittee focused primarily on demarcating the Subcommittee's medium to long-term action plan. Three major priorities were established in this regard, namely:

- a. the standardisation of existing administrative data collection practices and the development of a cohering definition of domestic violence to assist such efforts;

- b. the development of domestic violence prevalence data; and
- c. the undertaking of service evaluation studies to monitor service provision throughputs and outcomes and to establish indicators of best practice.

The Subcommittee has already pro-actively embarked on the process of identifying concrete measures for the realisation of these keystone priorities.

In relation to the standardisation of administrative data collection practices, the Subcommittee undertook a preliminary attempt at taking stock of existing service-based data structures. This exercise re-affirmed that while both the Health Department and the Courts of Justice are important correlated data sources, the Malta Police and both statutory and non-statutory service providers are presently the main hubs for indicator data. Appogg, for example, the national agency for the provision of domestic violence services collects and publishes related data, including “case turnover”, (reporting *inter alia* new, on-going and closed cases), type of abuse and referrals, on an on-going basis. Voluntary sector shelters maintain their own service-based statistics also recording referral and intake frequency on an on-going basis and police records track the frequency of domestic violence reports per locality. The challenge in the sector in this regard is to ensure that these data sources are streamlined to allow for greater comparability and more precise and timely reporting of the demands on service provision. It is anticipated that a concerted proposal on measures required for the standardisation of routine administrative data, including for example, the development of an inter-agency case management software system, will be produced by the Subcommittee over the coming months.

Conversely, however, the Subcommittee recognises that criminal justice and service-based administrative data only provide for a partial account of the reality of domestic violence in Malta. Victims of domestic violence may experience this reality in silence and without reaching out to the myriad of services offered on the Island. Moreover, reporting domestic violence offences to the police is often a last option. In this respect, we may thus speak of a significant, “hidden” or “dark” figure of domestic violence, which may be more adequately unravelled by population-based domestic violence prevalence surveys. It is within the framework of this social reality that, from the very start of its setting up, the Subcommittee prioritised the development of a proposal for the undertaking of a domestic violence prevalence survey as the main thrust of its mission in the short term. A proposal for the design and implementation of the prevalence survey, drawing significantly from the experience and expertise of the World Health Organisation in the area, was subsequently produced, discussed and referred to the Commission for its perusal and approval.

Achieving further headway on the standardisation of routine data sources and service evaluation studies shall be a major priority for the Subcommittee in the coming months. However, given the above, during the short-term, the Subcommittee’s efforts shall thus focus on the realisation of this milestone study, which if effected, will surely buttress our understanding on the extent and nature of the phenomenon of domestic violence in the Maltese Islands within a comparative, pan-European framework. Pathways for the

undertaking of ancillary, supporting studies (including the replication of the 2003 NSO study “*Domestic Violence against Women: Perceptions of the Maltese General Public*”) shall also be actively considered in an attempt to ensure a multi-pronged research strategy on domestic violence in Malta.



## **Appendix D**

### **Commission on Domestic Violence Subcommittee for a National Publicity Campaign**

#### **Annual Report March 07-February 08** Dr Roberta Lepre' Camilleri B.A. LL.D

The Subcommittee for a National Publicity campaign was set up in October 2007. Since one of its terms of reference of the Commission on Domestic Violence is awareness raising for the general public, the Commission felt that it would be appropriate to set up a Subcommittee that would be able to focus on this issue.

The Subcommittee is composed of:

Dr Roberta Lepre' Camilleri, (Commission on Domestic Violence) -Chairperson  
Ms Sara Bianchi, (Marketing Executive FSWS)  
Ms Doriana Bezzina, (Communications Coordinator, MFSS)  
Sr Joan Garner, (Commission on Domestic Violence)  
Ms Doris Vassallo (Secretary)

The Subcommittee met six times on 10 October 2007, 24 October 2007, 14 November 2007, 21 November 2007, 10 December 2007 and on 17 January 2008. Each meeting was about two hours long and all meetings took place in Block C Beltissebh, Floriana.

The Commission on Domestic Violence wanted the campaign to be a National Campaign and this reflects the composition of the Subcommittee. The Commission's aim is to work in collaboration with the entities providing services to the victims of domestic violence. Since a campaign can bring forth a number of referrals which the Domestic Violence Unit within Agenzija Appogg will have to deal with, it was important that the Foundation for Social Welfare Services was represented in this Subcommittee.

The activities which the Subcommittee organised in November 2007 **to mark the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women** were:

- a. An art competition 'Portray a Home without Violence'. This competition was organised for students between the age of 8 years and 16 years in collaboration with the Democracy and Values Education Section within the Education Division. The prize giving activity of the competition for students was held on Monday 26 November 2007 in the internal courtyard of the Ministry for the

Family and Social Solidarity. The Hon Minister Dolores Cristina presented the prizes to the students. Also present was Ms Gemma Mifsud Bonnici, Chairperson of the Malta Vodafone Foundation, who was one of the main sponsors. The other sponsors were Tutto Sport and Agenda Bookshop. The students' paintings were judged by Ms Josephine Vassallo, Education Officer within the Democracy and Values Education Section within the Education Division, Mr Cornelius Mulvaney from the Commission on Domestic Violence, who also acted as Chairperson, Mr Louis Xuereb from the Ministry for the Family and Social Solidarity and Ms Antoinette Gatt Rutter from the Domestic Violence Unit, Agenzija Appogg.

- b. Articles were written for the various newspapers to mark the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against women, including domestic violence:
- **'The Many Shades of Domestic Violence'** by Dr Marceline Naudi, Malta Today on November 25, 2007.
  - **'Rimedji aktar xierqa'** by Dr Roberta Lepre' Camilleri, *il-Mument* on November 25, 2007.
  - **'Ir-Realtà tal-Vjolenza Domestika'** by Mr Albert Bell, *Illum* on November 25, 2007.
  - **'L-Ebda Toleranza għall-Vjolenza'** feature on the Shelters in Malta and Gozo, with the collaboration of the various Shelters and Agenzija Appogg, Live, *it-Torca*, by journalist Ms Michelle Lia on November 25, 2007.
  - **'No Tolerance of Domestic Violence'** by The Hon Minister Dolores Cristina, The Sunday Times, on December 2, 2007.
  - **'Wara l-vjolenza; imdawra b'nies li jirrispettawni'** interview with an ex-service user and feature on a Shelter in Malta, Live, *it-Torca*, by journalist Ms Michelle Lia on December 2, 2007.
  - **'Ilsiera'** interview of Dr Marceline Naudi on *l-Orizzont* by journalist Mr Gaetano Micallef on December 3, 2007.
- c. The Chairperson and members of the Commission participated in various programmes as part of the events to mark the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against women. These included:
- Participation in a radio programme *Bejnietna* on RTK hosted by Ms Sonia Young on Thursday 22 November 2007 (Mr Albert Bell).
  - Participation in the radio programme *Familja Wahda* on PBS hosted by Ms Lilian Maistre on Tuesday 20 November 2007 and Tuesday 27 November 2007 (Dr Marceline Naudi).

- Participation in a current affairs programme *Newsline on Radju Malta* through a Telephone Interview by Mr Joe Dimech on Monday 26 November 2007 (Dr Roberta Lepre' Camilleri)
- Participation on a TV programme *Sellili* on Net Television hosted by Ms Claudette Pace on Tuesday 27 November 2007 (Dr Marceline Naudi).

The Commission in collaboration with the Foundation for Social Welfare Services and the Ministry organised the Malta White Ribbon Campaign. This campaign symbolizes men's stand against men's violence against women. In the evening before entering Parliament on Monday 26 November 2007, white ribbons were distributed to members of Parliament by Mr Peppi Azzopardi and Mr Daniel Caruana, representing media personalities and by Mr Joe Gerada CEO, Foundation for Social Welfare Services. Ms Antonia Micallef and Ms Claudette Baldacchino were also present. The Campaign was to be prolonged for an indefinite period along with the other events. White Ribbons were also sent to Heads of Programmes to be worn on television on the day. During the month of January 2008, posters and bookmarks related to the Malta White Ribbon Campaign were sent to all Local Councils around Malta and Gozo to be distributed to the general public. Campaign material was further distributed to all the Health Clinics for use of staff and the public using their services in March 2008.

Other work of the Subcommittee included:

- The distribution of Council of Europe leaflets for Parliamentarians related to a Campaign to combat violence against women, including domestic violence organised by the Council of Europe to members of Parliament.
- A Bus Shelter Campaign which was launched on 07 January 2008 in Pembroke by the Commission with the collaboration of the Local Councils Association. This campaign was based on the Council of Europe campaign on Eliminating Violence against Women including Domestic Violence. The Campaign continued throughout the month of January around Malta and Gozo. Leaflets related to the Bus Shelter Campaign were sent to all Local Councils around Malta and Gozo to be distributed to the general public from their end.
- An article 'Violent Homes', was published on the Sunday Circle in January 2008. It was written by Ms Sandy Calleja Portelli in which she investigated how, for some, home is a dangerous place to be.
- Presentation of the Donation to the Shelters which was held on Wednesday 30 January 2008. The donation was utilized by the Shelters in obtaining goods that they could be utilized by the women residing there to improve their quality of life.

Other media programmes in which the Chairperson and members of the Commission participated through contacts by the Subcommittee include:

- Participation in the Programme Bondiplus on TVM on Tuesday 27 February 2007 (Dr Roberta Lepre' Camilleri).
- Participation in the programme *KontraKurrent* on Campus FM broadcast on Wednesday 30 May 2007 at 10.06am and repeated on Saturday 2 June 2007 at 11.06am (Mr Albert Bell and Dr Marceline Naudi).
- Participation in a PBS radio programme hosted by Ms Susan Mulvaney on Saturday 25 August 2007 (Dr Marceline Naudi).
- Participation in a current affairs programme *Newsline* on *Radju Malta* through a Telephone Interview by Mr Joe Dimech on Tuesday 9 October 2007 (Dr Marceline Naudi).
- Participation in the Walkathon 'Women 4 women' organized by MTStyle Clinic on Friday October 12, 2007 (Dr Marceline Naudi and Dr Roberta Lepre' Camilleri).
- Participation in the radio programme *Familja Wahda* hosted by Ms Lilian Maistre on *Radju Malta* on Tuesday 11 December 2007. (Dr Roberta Lepre' Camilleri)
- Participation on the programme *Xarabank* hosted by Mr Peppi Azzopardi on TVM on January 4, 2008 (Dr Marceline Naudi)
- Participation on *Sellili* hosted by Ms Claudette Pace on NET TV on Tuesday 8 January 2008 ( Dr Marceline Naudi)
- Interview by Mr Saviour Balzan for the programme 'Reporter' aired on TVM on Friday 11 January, 2008 ( Dr Marceline Naudi).
- Participation on the programme *Xarabank* hosted by Mr Peppi Azzopardi on TVM on Friday 18 January, 2008 (Dr Marceline Naudi and Inspector Louise Calleja)

Additionally, the Subcommittee included its plans for further awareness raising activities to be conducted on a national level in the Commission's application for EU Funding through the European Social Fund which was submitted on the 22 February 2008. Should this request for funding be successful the Commission will be able to conduct further awareness raising activities amongst professionals and the general public at large, in order to enhance co-operation between all the relative players and promote zero tolerance to domestic violence amongst the Maltese population.