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ANTI-POVERTY FORUM MALTA ANNUAL REPORT 2015

APF Malta is a network of 14 organisations working together as a network on poverty. The Forum organises a number of conferences, seminars and focus groups, promotes research, disseminates information and creates awareness on poverty and social exclusion in Malta. Based on the 4 pillars of the MASS approach, the following is the work carried out by APF Malta during 2015.

Influencing National Governments for Better Policies: Advocacy, Lobbying and Policy-Making linked to European Level developments

- ❖ In 2015 APF Malta organised one national conference on homeless persons in Malta. The President of Malta HE M' Louise Coleiro Preca introduced the conference, whilst the Minister for the Family and Social Solidarity concluded the same conference.

The conference was well-attended. Participants included Ministry officials, trade unionists, social workers, carers and representatives of local councils. Overall APF Malta received very positive feedback from the participants. Whilst acknowledging that the conference reached its aim, one must note that following the conference, more awareness was raised on poverty in Malta and particularly on homelessness in Malta, through the various media coverage given to this conference. Following the conference APF Malta was also invited to participate in various television and radio programmes. This in itself was a good way to lobby on poverty and homelessness.

- ❖ APF Malta submitted another request to RTK Radio – a local popular radio station; to produce another series of programmes on poverty and social exclusion. Following a meeting with RTK's board, APF Malta commenced this series of programmes in October 2015 up till March 2016. Topics discussed included the FEAD project, social services and the pensions scheme in Malta, illiterism and other subjects related to poverty.

- ❖ A meeting with Parliament's Social Affairs Committee was held at The Parliament of Malta in Valletta to discuss poverty in Malta and the local reality. Social Affairs Committee Chairperson Hon Deborah Schembri welcomed Anti-Poverty Forum (APF) ExCo members and introduced the meeting by stating that poverty is a subject which is of interest to the Committee and that research studies are essential to show the current state of facts. The EMIN research findings were also presented during the same meeting.

- ❖ A meeting with the Civil Society Committee within the Malta Council for Economic and Social Development (MCESD) was held in September 2015. The aim of this meeting was to present the research findings of the European Minimum Income Network Study held locally and to discuss poverty issues and realities in Malta.

- ❖ A Pensions Working Group presented the Government of Malta with a sustainable pensions strategy. If implemented, this strategy will effect the elderly – a vulnerable group in our society living in poverty. To this extent, a couple of meetings were held with Mr David Spiteri Gingell from the Pensions Strategy Group to discuss in detail the recommendations put forward by this group. Following these meetings, APF Malta sent its' feedback to the Government.

- ❖ The European Commission Office in Malta, helped APF Malta to raise awareness on an important issue (poverty/social exclusion) – an issue that is of relevance from an EU policy perspective and has a direct impact on local citizens by financing the printing of a publication serving as a newspaper insert. Following various meetings, a draft of the newspaper insert was compiled and sent to the Commission. After a number of amendments a revised draft was sent to all members and the publication was printed and distributed in February 2015.

- ❖ A meeting was held with Opposition Spokesperson Hon Francis Zammit Dimech to discuss poverty and the Forum's role.

- ❖ A meeting with the Ministry of Finance NRP officer Ms Angela Buttigieg was held in July 2015 during which the NRPs and CSRs were discussed. Following this, another meeting was held with Dr Marisa Scerri and Mr George Sultana from the Ministry for the Family and Social Solidarity with regards to the NRP and CSRs. Both meetings concluded that the best way possible to influence the NRP and CSR is to contribute in the pre-budget document.

- ❖ Officials from the European Commission's DG Employment were in Malta on a fact-finding mission, focussing specifically on social policy, in October 2015 in preparation for the drafting of the Country Report and subsequent Country-Specific Recommendations in line with the European Semester. A meeting was held with these officials. The discussion during this meeting focused specifically on poverty drivers, as well as the availability and affordability of community care.

Participation of People Experiencing Poverty and Social Exclusion in Internal and External Workings of the National Network

- ❖ During 2015, meetings of the APF Malta ExCo were held on a regular basis, whereby a number of local issues on poverty and social exclusion were discussed. All ExCo members represent people experiencing poverty and social exclusion. To this extent, participation of people experiencing poverty is consistent and regular in all meetings held.

- ❖ APF Malta also participated in the People Experiencing Poverty in Brussels in November 2015. In preparation for this event, a number of meetings were held with people experiencing poverty and social exclusion, whilst three persons were chosen to take part and share their experience in this meeting in Brussels. APF Chairperson coordinated this meeting on behalf of APF Malta. To this extent he attended preparatory meetings organised by EAPN.

Development and Growth of the Network (including growth and training and capacity building actions)

- ❖ During 2015, APF Malta worked to increase its' membership. A meeting was held with Dar Merħba Bik a Maltese NGO working to with domestic violence victims and with 6PM Foundation. Following this meeting and discussion within ExCo, both organisations joined APF Malta network. However a member organisation – Jesuit Centre for Faith and Justice; was dissolved as an organisation and thus relinquished its' post within the Forum. To this extent APF Malta now consists of 14 organisations. The organisations that are part of APF Malta are the following:
 - Millennium Chapel Foundation
 - Caritas Malta
 - 'Ejjeu Ghandi' Children's Homes
 - National Association of Pensioners
 - Alleanza Kontra l-Faqar
 - OASI Foundation
 - Richmond Foundation
 - Paulo Freire Institute
 - Discern
 - S.O.S. Malta
 - St. Jeanne Antide Foundation
 - Fondazzjoni Suret il-Bniedem
 - Dar Merħba Bik
 - 6PM Foundation

- ❖ APF Malta participated in the Strategic Congress/General Assembly organised by EAPN held in Bilbao in July 2015.

- ❖ The President of the Republic of Malta organised a conference on in October 2015 titled “**The Determinants of Wellbeing: Insights from Research and Implications for Malta.**” Three APF members participated in this conference.

Governance and Internal Democracy (including internal governance, respect of statutory requirements, management in the network and funding).

- ❖ As per APF Malta Statute an Annual General Meeting was held in February 2015. During this meeting the Chairperson, Secretary and Treasurer presented their annual report, highlighting the events and activities of APF for the year before. No election was held.
- ❖ APF Malta ExCo met regularly during 2015. Meetings were held monthly, however at times more meetings were held to discuss various issues which arose from time to time. The year 2015 has been very fruitful.
- ❖ ExCo member from OASI Foundation attended the Capacity Building Meeting organised by EAPN in Leuven in Belgium on the 18 and 19th of June 2015. He noted that the meeting was a good networking experience.