

Annual Report 2014

Malta **Gay** Rights Movement

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Introduction

Gabi Calleja
Coordinator

This year will be remembered for the historical legislative achievements of the 14th April 2014 which saw the introduction of Civil Unions at par with marriage as well as anti-discrimination provisions on the grounds of sexual orientation and gender identity enshrined in the Constitution. Despite the apparent opposition to the inclusion of parenting rights by the majority of the electorate, the bill enjoyed the support of the Prime Minister and the PL parliamentary group who voted in favour of the bill with the PN parliamentary group choosing to abstain. The celebrations at St George's Square on the night of the 14th April marked an important milestone for LGBTI rights in Malta as the community and our allies took over the square and expressed their joy at what has been achieved.

MGRM was also heavily involved in the work of the LGBTI Consultative Council to draft the Gender Identity, Gender Expression and Sex Characteristics Bill which was tabled in Parliament on the 29th of October 2014. The bill went beyond MGRM's 2010 proposal to also include protection of the rights of Intersex Persons. The MGRM, in collaboration with the Ministry for Social Dialogue, Consumer Affairs and Civil Liberties (MSDC), organised joint training on Intersex Issues which also involved social workers, psychologists and health professionals in order to build their capacity to support Intersex persons and their families.

The MGRM committee, with the participation of other stakeholders also worked on a new strategic plan for the organisation which will cover the period 2015 to 2019. This involved reviewing what has been achieved so far and our aspirations for the coming years. It is clear that the current political climate presents a number of opportunities for furthering the work of the organisation in a way that up to a few years ago would have been deemed unrealistic. The working partnership established with the senior officials at MSDC coupled with political will has meant even greater achievements for the LGBTI community and for Maltese society as we collaborate on implementing initiatives that reflect best practice in the field.

The Rainbow Support Service is now firmly established and has consolidated the work MGRM does to provide support to the LGBTI community and their families through the weekly youth drop-in, social work services, counselling and psychological support, legal advice and training and consultation services provided. This was made possible through the financial support of the US Embassy and the MSDC NGO Fund, as well as the logistical support of Agenzija Zghazagh. MGRM has also participated in working groups within the Ministry for Education and Employment aimed at developing the *Addressing Bullying Behaviour in Schools Policy* launched in

November 2014 and the policy on *Including Trans, Gender Variant and Intersex Students* which is still in draft form and due to be finalised and launched in 2015.

MGRM continued to participate in a number of International events including the IDAHO conference which was this year hosted by the Maltese Government and which saw Malta registering the greatest improvement on ILGA-Europe's Rainbow Map. The MGRM also continued with its participation in the QuPiD (Queer Pathways into Diversity) project with a number of activists and professionals from MGRM as well as other organisations participating in training events organised by project partners in Poland, the UK and Lithuania. MGRM representatives also participated in a number of conferences and events such as the TGEU Council, the ILGA-Europe Annual Conference and the IGLYO training session on Norm Critical Education. MGRM was also encouraged to witness the increased presence of the Maltese Government at European and International LGBTI events.

The first LGBTI Community Awards event was held in November of 2014 attended by around 160 persons including the Prime Minister, The Minister for Civil Liberties and the US Ambassador. Eleven persons received awards in the various categories in recognition of their contributions to the advancement of LGBTI rights and to wider Maltese society.

MGRM is financially in a relatively good position and hopes to continue to sustain its Rainbow Support Service through the MSDC NGO Grant. The EEA/Norway NGO Grant made it possible for MGRM to employ a part-time policy and programmes officer although retaining our workers has proved to be a challenging endeavour. MGRM in partnership with MSDC, MEDE and aditus also secured a grant from ILGA-Europe to monitor the implementation of the policy on *Including Trans, Gender Variant and Intersex Students*.

We recognise that current achievements would not be possible without a strong local and International LGBTI movement to which MGRM's volunteers have contributed significantly. The investment of their time and development of their expertise has helped build the capacity of the organisation to the point where Malta is now taking the lead in Europe and the World where legislative measures are concerned. We now look forward to new challenges as we strive to reach out to the LGBTI community, build networks and introduce new services.

Reports

Colette Farrugia Bennett

Social welfare

During the past year, the social welfare team has continued to offer support to individuals and families requesting face-to-face meetings to discuss issues around LGBTIQ identities, family relationships and dynamics, coming out and health matters, among others. The social welfare team has also continued to provide support services through the National Gay Helpline and the Rainbow Support Service. Two members of the team, Ms Colette Farrugia Bennett and Ms Beverley Abela, have been working in the Rainbow Support Service to meet the needs of these service users. A proposal for funding was submitted to the NGO Government Fund for service funding for 2015 and news of the funding application is still pending.

Rainbow Support Service

During 2014 the service was funded by the US Embassy, the Government's NGO Fund and Agenzija Zghazagh. This service incorporates the Social Work service, a Youth Group for LGBTIQ persons aged between 15 and 25, Psychological Support, and a Legal Consultancy Service. The project also allows for the provision of consultation, workshops or training to schools and professionals involved in the provision of social welfare services.

During 2014, the Social Work service was in contact with over 60 individuals and families and has met with over 30 young people through the youth group. The Legal Consultancy Service assisted over 15 persons whose issues were mainly related to civil union registration, the registration of children, and the protection of asylum seekers identifying as LGBTIQ. The Psychological Support was offered to 5 persons who required financial support in accessing a psychologist in private practice.

In July 2014, the Malta Gay Rights Movement through the Rainbow Support Service in collaboration with aditus foundation and the Faculty for Social Wellbeing of the University of Malta organised a seminar during Pride Week which focused on Rainbow Families. The seminar was entitled "Perspectives of Rainbow Families in Malta" and the keynote speech was delivered by Prof. Susan Golombok, a research academic who has carried out extensive research in the field of children raised by same-sex couples. The seminar was mainly attended by professionals, academics and members of the LGBTIQ community.

In October 2014, the Malta Gay Rights Movement through the training funds of the Rainbow Support Service and the QuPiD Learning Partnership project, organised a training on "Counselling and Support of Intersex Persons and their Families". The training was organised in collaboration with the Ministry for Social Dialogue,

Consumer Affairs and Civil Liberties and the Ministry for Health. The training was delivered by Mr John Gerard Torpiano and Ms Ulrike Kloppel, and was attended by professionals coming from the mental health and health fields, as well as professionals working with the Rainbow Support Service.

The Rainbow Support Service met with over 10 students who were focusing their research on LGBTIQ issues in various areas of study including Social Work, Social Policy, Tourism, Education and Gender Issues.

This service offered consultancy and training session delivery to over 25 organisations, services and agencies, namely in the field of education, social services and health.

Grundtvig - Learning Partnership

During 2014, Ms Colette Farrugia Bennett continued to coordinate the Grundtvig - Learning Partnership project on behalf of the Malta Gay Rights Movement. The project is formed of six partners, with a German organisation, the VNB, in the role of coordinator. The other partners include the Akademie Waldschloesschen (Germany), GOBS (England), LGL (Lithuania) and KPH (Poland). The project title is "Queer Pathways into Diversity: 'being different' as a key factor in LGBT*Q European Adult Education (QuPiD)". It aims at strengthening political LGBT*Q (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans*gender and Queer) adult education as an important strategy to combat anti-homosexual, -bisexual and -trans*gender tendencies, policies and violence in European societies and to work for the respect of different ways of living without discrimination – enabling inclusion and active citizenship of marginalized groups.

The first mobility that MGRM took part in was held in Warsaw, Poland in February 2014 and organised by KPH. The topic under discussion was "LGBT*Q - together, side by side, or against?". This meeting was attended by Ms Colette Farrugia Bennett, as a staff member of this project, and Ms Ruth Baldacchino and Ms Romina Tolu as learners. The second mobility took place in Carlisle, United Kingdom in July 2014 and was organised by GOBS. The topic discussed was "Counselling and Support Systems". This meeting was attended by Ms Colette Farrugia Bennett, as a staff member of this project, and Ms Beverley Abela, Ms Antonella Mizzi and Mr Matthew Bartolo as learners. The third mobility took place in Vilnius, Lithuania in October 2014 and organised by LGL. The topic under discussion was "Policy and Legal Implications in LGBT Adult Education". This meeting was attended by Ms Colette Farrugia Bennett, as a staff member of this project, and Ms Raisa Colombo, Mr Kirk Brincou and Ms Emma Portelli Bonnici as learners.

The learners chosen to attend the mobilities were always selected based on their area of expertise or work experience. The learners came from the Rainbow Support Service, Willingness, We Are, and aditus.

Mark Grech

International Relations

MGRM continues to attach great importance to participating in the international arena, believing this improves and sustains our capacity and development building. As such, MGRM committee members were involved in a number of international conferences and meetings in 2014.

Launch of ILGA-Europe's MEP Campaign – Strasbourg, France, and Advocacy Meeting on European Elections – Brussels, Belgium.

Gabi Calleja, as Co-chair of ILGA-Europe's Executive Board attended the launch event of ILGA-Europe's Come Out campaign held on the 14th January aimed at raising LGBTI issues with MEP candidates in all EU Member states. Roberta Metsola Tedesco Triccas signed up to ILGA-Europe's Campaign Pledge on behalf of the EPP group.

The Advocacy meeting was attended by Policy and Programmes Officer Nicole Scerri. The meeting conveyed knowledge of ILGA-Europe's campaign objectives and the EU decision-making mechanisms on which the election would have an impact. This included integrating the content of ILGA-Europe's campaign tools, informing and empowering participants and members on ILGA-Europe's campaign tools, assistance with outreach programmes, media strategies to draw attention to the members' campaign initiatives, strategy setting for campaign initiatives and coalition building within LGBTI and broader human rights movement.

Norm Critical Approach in Education Seminar – Stockholm, Sweden

ILGA-Europe and IGLYO (International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Queer Youth and Student Organisation) in partnership with RFSL co-organised a seminar on the use of norm-critical approaches in education in Stockholm from 4 to 6 April 2014 attended by Beverly Abela. Norm criticism has proven to be a very powerful way of addressing all kinds of stereotypes and prejudices reflected in school environments. The training seminar involved a number of skill building workshops as well as the sharing of good practice.

ILGA-Europe Annual Conference – Riga, Latvia

The annual conference of ILGA-Europe took place in Riga, Latvia, between the 9th and 11th October 2014, with the theme *MOVEment: Leading Sustainable Change*. The conference was attended by Gabi Calleja in her role as Co-chair of the executive board of ILGA-Europe, Mark Grech who was part of the Charing Pool of the Conference as well as representing MGRM at the Advocacy Network Meeting and Colette Farrugia Bennett who obtained a scholarship to attend the conference.

The conference was addressed by a number of high profile speakers and included a Queer-Ed talk by Jordi Vaquer, Director of the Open Society Initiative for Europe, a panel discussion involving Eliza Byard, Executive Director of the Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network of the USA; Helena Dalli, Minister for Civil Liberties; Charles Radcliffe, Chief of Global Issues Section at the Office of the UN High Commissioner of Human Rights; Marja Ruotanen, Director of Human Dignity and Equality within the Directorate General of Democracy, Council of Europe and Matty Hart, Founder of the Lafayette Principle and Graeme Reid, Director of the LGBT Rights Programme at Human Rights Watch.

IDAHO Forum 2014 – Valletta, Malta

Mark Grech attended a preparatory meeting of the IDAHO Forum 2014 hosted by the governments of Sweden and Malta on April 7th 2014, in Stockholm, Sweden. The purpose of the Expert-Level Meeting ahead of the 2nd IDAHO Forum was to discuss ways to extend the scope of commitment to a broader European context including the drafting of a Statement of Intent.

The 2nd IDAHO Forum took place at the Mediterranean Conference Centre in Valletta and was co-hosted by the Maltese and Swedish Governments. The international conference took place between the 13th and 14th of May and was attended by various ministers and delegates from different countries including Sweden, Ireland, Holland, Montenegro, Croatia, Slovenia, Denmark, Albania and Luxemburg. Various other government delegations from the majority of the EU countries also participated.

Addressing a joint press conference together with Swedish Minister for Integration Erik Ullenhag, Hon. Helena Dalli Minister for Social Dialogue, Consumer Affairs and Civil Liberties noted how this forum provided an opportunity for fellow Mediterranean and Southern European countries to elevate LGBTI issues higher up on their national agendas.

Seventeen Member States signed up to the IDAHO Declaration of Intent with the aim of gathering momentum for coordinated action at national, European and global levels. Malta's Prime Minister Dr Joseph Muscat addressed the foreign delegates during a reception that was held to mark the occasion.

A number of MGRM committee members participated in the event with Mark Grech serving as one of the two hosts for the conference and Colette Farrugia Bennett sitting on one of the workshop panels. Gabi Calleja together with Evelyne Paradis also presented ILGA-Europe's Rainbow Package.

The LGBTI Consultative Council also took the opportunity presented by this event to meet up with representatives of TGEU to discuss best practice in relation to Trans children in view of the Gender Identity, Gender Expression and Sex Characteristics Bill which was being drafted at that time.

5th European Transgender Council – Budapest, Hungary

Ruth Baldacchino attended the TGEU Council Meeting entitled *Trans: Safe & Equal* held between the 1st and 4th May 2014. Around 200 delegates met to discuss, strategize and network over how to improve safety and equality for trans people.

The Council was launched with a meet & greet event with representatives of the Dutch, US, Norwegian and Finnish embassies and with keynote speeches by the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Navi Pillay, and the Maltese Minister of Social Dialogue, Consumer Affairs and Civil Liberties, Helena Dalli. Minister Dalli declared that she aspires to make Malta a world-leader in trans equality. She told delegates: “We are doing what is right, what should have been done a long time ago. There should not be such a thing as second class citizenship – not for trans people, not for anyone.” The council meeting involved a number of panel discussions and workshops, the appointing of the TGEU board members and approval of the strategic plan for TGEU.

Other meetings, conferences and seminars attended

ILGA-Europe Executive Board
Brussels, Belgium 27th February to 2nd March 2014
Nicosia, Cyprus 29th May to 2nd June 2014
Brussels, Belgium 4th to 7th September 2014
Gabi Calleja

Rights on the Move: Rainbow Families in Europe
Ljubljana, Slovenia 7-8th March 2014
Neil Falzon

Interview Panel Advocacy Director ILGA-Europe
Brussels, Belgium 20th to 22nd March 2014
Gabi Calleja

European Forum of LGBT Christians Annual Meeting
Tallinn, Estonia 22nd to 24th May 2014
Gabi Calleja

Community and Organisational Development to Lead Sustainable Change
Ljubljana, Slovenia 19th to 22nd November 2014
Kelly McSherry

Gabi Calleja

Media

MGRM was present in the media throughout the year particularly in advocating for the Civil Union Bill and the Gender Identity, Gender Expression and Sex Characteristics Bill. MGRM continued to communicate its message in all types of media, ranging from television and printed news, to the internet and through the use of social networks such as Twitter & especially Facebook.

The most noted instances of MGRM's media presence occurred around several key events such as:

- The passing of the Civil Union Act
- Pride Week
- IDAHO
- The 1st Reading of the Gender Identity, Gender Expression and Sex Characteristics Bill
- LGBTI Community Awards

Below are some of the articles or programmes in which MGRM featured throughout 2014.

	Article/Programme	Medium	Date
1	'Equality does not imply the end of sexual difference' http://www.independent.com.mt/articles/2014-02-07/news/equality-does-not-imply-the-end-of-sexual-difference-3896868865/	Independent	7 th February 2014
2	L-Ewwel Sena tal-Gvern - X'Jahsbu Dwarha? http://www.kullhadd.com/201403085955/Ahbarijiet/l-ewwel-sena-tal-gvern-xjahsbu-dwarha.html	Kulhadd	8 th March 2014
3	Muscat gets mixed reaction after one year in government http://maltatoday.uberflip.com/i/275833-mw-12-march-2014/1	Malta Today	12 th March 2014
4	Same sex unions approved - Celebrations in Valletta - Opposition abstains because of adoptions http://www.timesofmalta.com/articles/view/20140414/local/same-sex-unions-approved-celebrations-in-valletta-opposition-abstains-because-of-adoptions.514992	Times of Malta	14 th April 2014
5	Civil Unions Bill passes through Parliament http://www.independent.com.mt/articles/2014-04-14/news/civil-unions-bill-passes-through-parliament-4628643840/	Independent	14 th April 2014
6	Civil Unions: A Historic Moment http://www.maltatoday.com.mt/comment/blogs/37995/civil_unions_a_historic_moment#.VQg4oNLF9vk	Malta Today	14 th April 2014
7	Civil Unions Passed into Law in Malta 14-04-14 https://vimeo.com/92050033	Malta Today Vimeo	14 th April 2014
8	Malta adopts same-sex civil union law http://www.ilga-europe.org/home/news/latest/malta_adopts_same_sex_civil_union_law	ILGA-Europe website	14 th April 2014
9	New video: Gays 'celebrating equality' in Valletta; PM cheered, Opposition booed http://www.independent.com.mt/articles/2014-04-14/news/gays-prepare-to-celebrate-equality-4624908289/	Independent	14 th April 2014

10	Malta: Douze Points! First Constitution in Europe to Protect Gender Identity http://tgeu.org/malta-douze-points-first-constitution-in-europe-to-name-gender-identity-tgeu-statement/	TGEU Website	15 th April 2015
11	Malta becomes first European country to recognize gender identity in Constitution http://www.dailykos.com/story/2014/04/15/1292200/-Malta-becomes-first-European-country-to-recognize-gender-identity-in-Constitution	Daily Kos Website	15 th April 2014
12	Civil Unions Bill passes through Maltese Parliament http://www.mccv.org.au/civil-unions-bill-passes-through-maltese-parliament/	Maltese Community Council of Victoria Website	15 th April 2014
13	Malta legalises gay civil unions, adoption http://www.i24news.tv/en/news/international/europe/140415-malta-legalises-gay-civil-unions-adoption	i24News.tv	15 th April 2014
14	Malta votes for same sex civil unions and adoption http://www.iglyo.com/2014/04/16/malta-votes-for-same-sex-civil-unions-and-adoption/	IGLYO	16 th April 2014
15	Maltese Parliament adopted civil union http://humanistfederation.eu/news-eu.php?pages=maltese-parliament-adopted-civil-union	European Humanist Federation Website	16 th April 2014
16	Maltese Celebrate Civil Unions, Adoption Rights for Same-Sex Couples http://www.advocate.com/world/2014/04/16/watch-maltese-celebrate-civil-unions-adoption-rights-same-sex-couples	Advocate.com	16 th April 2014
17	Vivantes on IDAHO	One TV	12 th May 2014
18	17 countries join declaration against discrimination in Malta forum http://www.timesofmalta.com/articles/view/20140514/local/17-countries-join-declaration-against-discrimination-in-malta-forum.519015	Times of Malta	14 th May 2014
19	Malta, Sweden co-host forum against homophobia http://www.independent.com.mt/articles/2014-05-16/news/malta-sweden-co-host-forum-against-homophobia-5029036032/	Independent	16 th May 2014
20	International day against homophobia and transphobia http://www.independent.com.mt/articles/2014-05-17/news/international-d%20ay-against-homophobia-and-transphobia-5033984000/?__c=__c	Independent	17 th may 2014
21	Lawrence Gonzi: Free vote on civil unions could have been an option; MGRM reacts http://www.independent.com.mt/articles/2014-04-22/news/lawrence-gonzi-free-vote-on-civil-unions-could-have-been-an-option-4707647488/	Independent	22 nd April 2014
22	Ugwaljanza ghal-kulhadd http://mizzimarlene.com/ugwaljanza-ghal-kulhadd/	Marlene Mizzi Website	22 nd May 2014
23	Malta ranks among the best countries for LGBTi rights http://www.independent.com.mt/articles/2014-05-27/news/malta-ranks-among-the-best-countries-for-lgbti-rights-5194579969/	Independent	27 th May 2014
24	Gay pride march 2014 'a celebration of the family' http://www.maltatoday.com.mt/news/national/41104/gay_pride_march_2014_a_celebration_of_the_family#.VQhMkdLF9vk	Malta Today	11 th July 2014
25	Pride Week	One Radio	12 th July 2014
26	LGBT community celebrates once more http://www.independent.com.mt/articles/2014-07-12/news/gay-pride-parade-in-valletta-5808947200/	Independent	12 th July 2014
27	The kids are alright http://www.independent.com.mt/articles/2014-07-27/newspaper-letters/The-kids-are-alright!-5967708161	Independent	27 th July 2014

28	KSU Speak Up Campaign	YouTube	30 th July 2014
29	Is-Sess: Trans and Intersex Issues	One Radio	August 2014
30	Indigo Programme on Gender Identity, Gender Expression and Sex Characteristics Bill	One Tv	22 nd September 2014
31	Civil liberties minister launches Gender Identity Act http://www.maltatoday.com.mt/news/national/45611/civil_liberties_minister_launches_gender_identity_act#.VQg8_tLF9vk	Malta Today	29 th October 2014
32	Changes to gender identity will be made by notarial deed under new proposal http://www.timesofmalta.com/articles/view/20141029/local/changes-to-gender-identity-will-be-made-by-notarial-deed-under-new-proposal.541833	Times of Malta	29 th October 2014
33	Is-Sess: Coming Out and Trans Issues	One Radio	October 2014
34	First Gay Awards Nominees Revealed http://www.timesofmalta.com/articles/view/20141104/local/first-gay-awards-nominees-revealed.542560	Times of Malta	4 th November 2014
35	Religious icons, politicians, singers and sports legends nominated for first LGBTI community awards http://www.independent.com.mt/articles/2014-11-04/local-news/Religious-icons-politicians-singers-and-sports-legends-nominated-for-first-LGBTI-community-awards-6736124926	Independent	4 th November 2014
36	Sense of self as male or female is not determined by one's chromosomes, hormones and sexual organs http://www.independent.com.mt/articles/2014-11-09/newspaper-letters/Sense-of-self-as-male-or-female-is-not-determined-by-one-s-chromosomes-hormones-and-sexual-organs-6736125210	Independent	9 th November 2014
37	When gender and sex are not aligned http://www.timesofmalta.com/articles/view/20141110/letters/When-gender-and-sex-are-not-aligned.543369	Times of Malta	10 th November 2014
38	VS – Discussion on LGBTI issues	Favourite Channel	10 th November 2014
39	Vivantes – LGBTI Community Awards	One	12 th . November 2014
40	KSU Consultation Session on the Gender Identity, Gender Expression and Sex Characteristics Bill https://ksusocialpolicy.wordpress.com/	Insiter online	23 rd November 2014
41	Dak li Jghodd – Rainbow Support Service	One TV	November 2014
42	74% tal-kazi tal-AIDS f'Malta huma fl-irgjel http://www.illum.com.mt/ahbarijiet/socjali/39454/74_ta_kai_tal_aids_malta_huma_fliriel#.VQhA-9LF9vk	Lllum	1 st December 2014
43	OII-Europe applauds Malta's Gender Identity, gender Expression and Sex Characteristics Act http://oiieurope.org/oi-europe-applauds-maltas-gender-identity-gender-expression-and-sex-characteristics-act/	OII Europe Website	4 th December 2014
44	Xarabank – Gender Identity, Gender Expression and Sex Characteristics Bill	TVM	5 th December 2014
45	LGBTI community awards ceremony http://www.timesofmalta.com/articles/view/20141207/social/LGBTI-community-awards-ceremony.547199	Times of Malta	7 th December 2014

Frederick Bartolo Parnis

Membership

The total number of members on MGRM's database is 449, of which there are 21 lifetime members and 25 new members or members who renewed during 2014.

The number of paid members once more decreased slightly in 2014. The idea of lifetime membership via a onetime payment of 80 Euro is quite popular. The membership form is available online and payment can be made via Pay Pal or directly to MGRM's HSBC account. Membership is mostly paid during Pride week or during conferences held throughout the year.

Unfortunately, this remains a weakness for MGRM although emails are sent out frequently to remind members to renew their membership. MGRM is committed to investing in reaching out to potential members and reviewing its membership processes to facilitate and encourage new members as well as renewal of memberships.

Legal Recognition of Individuals and their Families

The Civil Union Bill was tabled in parliament on the 30th September 2013 and completed the 2nd reading phase in December 2013. Meetings by the Consideration of Bills Committee to discuss amendments to the bill were carried out in 2014. The MGRM attended all of these parliamentary committee meetings and intervened in the discussions. The 3rd reading and the passing of the bill into law took place on the 14th and 17th April 2014 respectively.

This important piece of legislation grants legal recognition to same-sex couples at par with marriage and also includes parenting rights. The law also recognises marriages contracted abroad thus introducing marriage equality into Maltese legislation. The first civil union ceremony took place in Gozo on the 14th June 2014. Subsidiary legislation was required and passed in order to ensure the effective enjoyment of the rights and obligations enshrined in the Civil Union Act. The monitoring of the implementation of this Act is an ongoing process.

The MGRM also continues to lobby for amendments to the Embryo Protection Act to remove discriminatory provisions which exclude same-sex couples from accessing reproductive health services.

Facilitation to Gender Identity Recognition

The second major task assigned to the LGBTI Consultative Council was the drawing up of a Gender Identity Bill, eventually named the Gender Identity, Gender Expression and Sex Characteristics Bill. This piece of legislation was tabled in parliament on the 29th of October 2014 following which a public consultation process was initiated. MGRM members were involved in the discussions within the LGBTI Consultative Council to develop the bill which built on MGRM's 2010 proposal. The Bill:

- Introduces a right to gender identity for all persons
- Regulates the procedure for change of legal gender for minors and adults alike
- Bans any requirements for medical interventions, psychological tests, etc
- Recognises foreign decisions regarding gender identity by a competent court or responsible authority
- Allows for amendments of gendered characteristics on all official documents (e.g. ID card / passport) or certificates
- Provides for the privacy of the person whose gender has been rectified on official documents
- Introduces a positive obligation on government entities to ensure that their services meet the objectives of this Act
- Provides parents with the possibility to postpone the entry of a gender marker on their children's birth certificate until they reach the age of 14

- Introduces a right to bodily integrity and physical autonomy for all persons
- Makes non-medically necessary treatment on the sex characteristics of a person without informed consent unlawful
- Provides for psychosocial counselling, support and medical interventions related to sex and/or gender
- Provides for a revision of the protocol regulating sex assignment treatment and/or surgical interventions on the sex characteristics of a person

Legal Notice 274 of 2014 amended the *Employment and Industrial Relations Act* to outlaw workplace discrimination based on one's gender identity.

LGBTI Senior Citizens

As part of the EEA/Norway NGO Grant project, the MGRM sought to develop its capacity to address the issues faced by LGBTI senior citizens. The initial phase of this process was to gather the life experiences of a number of LGBTI senior citizens preferably from diverse backgrounds.

Five interviews were carried out after asking for people 60+ who identify as LGBTI from within personal and MGRM related contacts. The interviews sought to establish senior members of the Community's experiences of Maltese society, social services, their social networks and family relationships.

The outcomes of the process are to be drawn up into a document that can be used as a point of discussion for a seminar to be held with stakeholders in 2015. The project aims to increase our understanding of the lived experiences of LGBTI senior citizens and to ensure services and policies are in place to support older members of the LGBTI Community in Malta.

Equal Treatment between persons

The 14th April 2014 saw anti-discrimination provisions on the grounds of sexual orientation and gender identity enshrined in the Maltese Constitution. This Private Members Bill put forward by MP Claudette Buttigieg originally covered the ground of sexual orientation but was amended at committee stage to also include gender identity, making Malta the first European country to offer constitutional protection on this ground. The Bill was passed unanimously enjoying support from both sides of the House.

On Human Rights Day, the Ministry for Social Dialogue, Consumer Affairs and Civil Liberties launched a White Paper on the setting up of a Human Rights and Equality Commission launching two legislative initiatives one of which was an *Equality Act* that would extend anti-discrimination protection beyond employment. The Equality Act is expected to be tabled in 2015.

Prisons and police and detention services interaction with transgender inmates

MGRM submitted a number of project proposals aimed at addressing police training, the collection of data and reporting of hate crimes, relations between the LGBTI community and police and the treatment of transgender inmates at the Corradino Correctional Facility. So far none has been successful and this remains one of the areas still to be addressed.

Education and Young People

Gabi Calleja continued to represent MGRM on the Working Group set up by the Minister for Education and Employment to revise the Directorate's Anti-Bullying Policy. The policy document entitled *Addressing Bullying Behaviour in Schools* launched in November 2014 is the first to make specific reference to homophobic and transphobic bullying.

MGRM was also part of a working group set up by the MEDE to draw up a policy aimed at Including Trans, Gender Variant and Intersex Students. This document was drafted in 2014 and should be officially launched in 2015.

Local networking

In 2014, MGRM continued to work with a number of entities through the LGBTI Consultative Council as well as through its membership in PHROM, the Platform for Human Rights Organisations in Malta. It collaborated with other organisations for Pride Week and throughout the year met up with a number of entities including the Malta Union of Teachers.

Below is a list of the most influential events and activities which MGRM organised and/or participated in during 2014:

Civil Union Celebration on the 14th April 2014

MGRM organised a celebratory event in St George's square to which a number of artists and performers contributed and which saw the participation of over 1,000 LGBTI individuals and allies. The parliament building was lit up in Rainbow colours as the announcement of the passing of the bill was transmitted through the sound system set up in the square and the cheers from those present hailed this historic achievement. A giant wedding cake was displayed and shared out among those present.

Information Meeting on the Civil Union Act

An information Meeting on the Civil Union Act: Scope, Rights and Obligations was held on the 24th April at the Excelsior Hotel in Floriana. This involved the participation of a number of speakers including Ermelinda Zahra, Director of Public Registry; Silvan Agius, Policy Coordinator at MSDC, Cyrus Engerer, Chair of the LGBTI Consultative Council and Neil Falzon, Director of aditus and Legal Advisor to MGRM. The meeting was part-funded through the EEA/Norway NGO Grant. Information provided included the procedures that need to be followed to enter into a civil union, what form the civil union ceremony could take and parenting rights, among others.

Human Library Giovanni Curmi Higher Secondary 6th March 2014

MGRM members participated in a 'Human Library' which took place at the Higher Secondary in Naxxar where two members of MGRM's committee posed as LGBTI books. The event was well attended and involved members responding to questions and queries from the students about their life as an LGBT individual. Lots of good feedback was obtained.

Pride Week 12th to 18th July 2014

Family: Where Love Matters More was the theme chosen for this year's Pride Week as the LGBTI community celebrated the passing of the Civil Unions Act and the legal recognition it grants to same-sex couples and their families and was a joint effort between MGRM, aditus, We Are and Drachma with the financial support of the Ministry for Social Dialogue, Consumer Affairs and Civil Liberties. A series of short clips were produced in the run up to Pride Week highlighting the theme with the participation of a number of well-known politicians, presenters and artists including Minister Helena Dalli, MP Claudette Buttigieg, MEP's Marlene Mizzi and Roberta

Metsola, AD Spokesperson Angele Deguara, Ira Losco, Peppi Azzopardi, Angie Laus and Ray Calleja. These were shared widely on social media.

This year's Pride March event took place on Friday 11th July 2014, gathering at 6pm in St George's Square, Valletta and ending at Hastings Garden. The date had to be changed at a late stage due to the 200th anniversary celebrations of the Malta Police Force taking place on Saturday 12th July. Around 100 people attended the pride march at which the Minister Helena Dalli and opposition spokesperson Paula Mifsud Bonnici as well as representatives from AD and LGBTI NGO's also attended. The March was animated by the band KazinSka.

The Pride Week sought to raise awareness and understanding particularly with respect to the misconceptions that exist around the impact of parenting by same-sex couples and included a Public Seminar entitled *Perspectives of Rainbow Families in Malta* on Friday 18th July, organized in collaboration with aditus with the participation of key note speaker Professor Susan Golombok and Professor Angela Abela. Minister Helena Dalli gave the welcome address. A Rainbow Family event was held at Inspire on Sunday 13th July attended by a number of parents with their children who enjoyed fun games in the pool as well as a Zumba session and buffet lunch.

The 10th edition of WomenSpace was held on Friday 18th July at St Maria Winery in Attard. Thanks to the hard work of the WomenSpace crew the event was a huge success with over 200 LBTI women attending and raising over €2,000. A number of DJ's and performers helped to entertain those present.

Training on Counselling and Support of Intersex Persons and their Families

This training was held on the 14th, 17th and 18th of October and was organised in collaboration with MSDC as well as the Parliamentary Secretary for Health. Participants included social workers, psychologists and health professionals from government agencies as well as from the Rainbow Support Service and the Department of Gender Studies at the University of Malta.

This initial training aimed to equip already qualified and experienced professionals in gaining an understanding of intersex issues and to be able to support intersex persons and their families if the need arose. This in view of the Gender Identity, Gender Expression and Sex Characteristics Act soon to be tabled in parliament.

The training included an introductory session covering the medical aspects of Intersex conditions delivered by Mr John Gerard Torpiano, an overview of the Gender Identity, Gender Expression and Sex Characteristics Bill and its implications for Intersex Persons and their Families delivered by Silvan Agius from MSDC and training focusing on issues faced by intersex persons and their families and how best to support them through social work, counselling or psychological interventions delivered by Ulrike Klöppel a clinical psychologist working closely with intersex organisations and especially with OII Germany for more than 15 years.

LGBTI Community Awards

For the first time MGRM organised the LGBTI Community Awards which was made possible through the financial support of a private donor. The purpose of the awards is to recognise and celebrate Maltese society and those who have made an outstanding contribution across various categories including LGBTI rights. The announcement of the categories and nominees generated some discussion on social media and concerns were addressed at an information meeting.

The event was held at Xara Lodge and was attended by over 160 people including the Prime Minister, Minister for Social Dialogue, Consumer Affairs and Civil Liberties and several Ambassadors. Feedback from those attending was very positive. Proceeds from donations towards some of the tables went to MGRM to be used for upcoming projects.

Frederick Bartolo Parnis

Accounts

INCOME & EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT

For the year ended 31st December

	2014		
	€	€	€
Income:			
ILGA HRVDF			-
Raising Trust Fund			-
Support Groups Trust Fund			-
Youth Programme Funds			-
Civil Society Grant			-
Voices Foundation Grant			-
IE Capacity Building Grant			-
Marriage Equality			-
US Embassy Grant			-
Civil Society Grant 2			-
Grundtvig Preparatory Mtg Grant			-
Ministry for Civil Liberties Pride			-
US Embassy Grant It Gets Better			-
US Embassy Grant Rainbow Support Service			12,105
Dutch Embassy Grant Pride Week			-
Grundtvig Mobility Grant			11,103
EEA/Norway Grant			10,650
NGO Grant			4,514
Donations & Fund-Raising			44,921
Membership Fees			<u>410</u>
			83,702
Administration Expenses:			
P.R. Literature & Brochures	1,231		
Salaries	7,070		
NI Contributions	1,400		
Rent	1,050		
Water & Electricity	148		
Printing	1,347		
Postage	69		
Telephone	395		
Internet & Web-based Subscriptions	235		
Office Stationery	71		
Audit & Accountancy Fees	-		
Professional Fees - Researchers	11,579		
Office Machine Maintenance	45		
Refreshments	3,803		
Premises Expenses	764		
Bank Charges	139		
Depreciation - Office Furniture & Equipment	<u>581</u>	29,927	

Event Expenses:			
Travelling	10,689		
Conferences	1,837		
Entertainment	25,947		
Permits	200		
Equipment Hire	2,201		
Training Costs	2,168		
Miscellaneous Expenses	<u>295</u>	<u>43,338</u>	<u>73,265</u>

NET SURPLUS / (DEFICIT) 10,437

BALANCE SHEET

As at 31st December 2012

	2014	
	€	€
Fixed Assets:		
Office Furniture & Equipment		2,324
Current Assets:		
Sundry Debtors	-	
Bank Current A/c #1	24,124	
Bank Current A/c #2	10,420	
Bank Savings	1	
Bank Current A/c #3 - Grundtvig	820	
Petty Cash	954	
Euros @ EUR 2.3294 : Lm 1		<u>36,319</u>
		38,643
Current Liabilities:		
Sundry Creditors		2,000
TOTAL NET ASSETS		<u>36,643</u>

Represented by:

ILGA HRVDF Reserve	-
Rausing Trust Fund Reserve	-
Youth Programme Funds Reserve	-
Civil Society Grant Reserve	-
Voices Foundation Grant Reserve	-
IE Capacity Building Grant Reserve	-
Marriage Equality Reserve	-
US Embassy Grant Reserve	-
Civil Society Grant 2 Reserve	-
Grundtvig Preparatory Mtg Grant Reserve	-
Ministry for Civil Liberties Pride Reserve	-
US Embassy Grant It Gets Better Reserve	-
US Embassy Grant Rainbow Support Service Reserve	7,085
Dutch Embassy Grant Pride Week Reserve	-

Grundtvig Mobility Grant Reserve	2,097
EEA/Norway Grant Reserve	(1,940)
NGO Grant Reserve	13,486
Accumulated Surplus	<u>15,915</u>
	<u>36,643</u>
