



Chairperson Report 2023

26th February 2024

During 2023, 7 board meetings were held on 6 January, 17 February, 4 April, 19 May, 16 June, 3 November and 15 December. Some were virtual and others in person. There was a quorum reached for all of these meetings. In between meetings there was ongoing communication between board members and member organisations via emails and phone calls.

MHN Board for 2023 was as follows
Gertrude Buttigieg (Chairperson),
Christopher Vella (Vice-Chairperson),
Demis Cachia (Treasurer)
Marcelline Warrington (Secretary)
Dr Christine Baluci (member)
Godwin Micallef (member)
George Sultana (Member)
Mark Mallia (co-opted member)

We would like to thank the Office of the Prime Minister (OPM) for approving once again the secondment of Ms Melanie Agius Attard to assist MHN in administrative work and upcoming projects. Thanks also to the Medicines Authority who are still supporting MHN through the MOU signed a few years ago.

Funding and Support

MHN does not carry out any fund-raising activities, our only source of regular income is the annual membership.

In 2023 MHN received funds through the Training Initiative Fund 2023 by MCVS.

MHN also managed to make it for VOPs 2023 funding 'Be heard and Be Seen'. These are also thanks to MCVS. We have produced 5 videos with educational messages targeted at patients & public in general. The launch of this presentation is being held after the AGM in February 2024.

Enisie project: During 2023 we benefitted from funds for a communications campaign funded through ENISIE – managed by MCVS. We worked with Communique where social media posts were prepared and published every two weeks. These posts focused on patients' rights.

We applied and were successful in our application for funds through SIS 2024 funds – project to be implemented in 2024.

Erasmus+ project on Managing chronic conditions at the workplace was concluded and full payment received.

Membership update

During 2023, 12 members did not renew their membership but none informed that they were no longer interested, 3 organisations have not paid since 2020. Should any organization experience difficulties with paying membership please approach the board in writing and we will try to help out.

A new member joined this is the Association of Private Family Doctors

Activities on Local Level

As mentioned earlier we held Training sessions towards the beginning of 2023 thanks to the TIS funds – these involved 5 training where training sessions were carried out between January – March 2023. 5 Patient Empowerment training sessions were carried out. These sessions included Access to Medicine, Anti-Microbial Resistance, Patients' Rights, Self-Management and Safe use of Medicines. For the last session we were honoured to have with us the Parliamentary Secretary for Active Aging and Consumer Affairs, Hon JoEtienne Abela. These five sessions were held at the Life Sciences Park between 12th January 2023 and 23rd March 2023. For these sessions we also had the Support of the Medicines Authority who sponsored our venue. The presentations given at separate sessions were recorded and are available on MHN You Tube Channel and website in a section specifically dedicated to this project.

For Patients' Rights day a seminar was held particularly focused on Treatment Abroad options for Maltese Citizens. This was also recorded, and recording is available on Website and MHN YouTube Channel.

We finalised the ERASMUS + project in which we were partners with the Platform of Spanish Patients and published the Guidelines: Managing people with chronic diseases in the work environment

VOPS PROJECT.

MHN applied for and was approved funds to organise short videos (2 in Maltese and 3 in English) based on promotion on media to create awareness with the public on patient empowerment, self-management and Patient-Professional Communication. The project involved 3 focus groups and then the production of the videos based on outcome of focus groups. These videos will be freely available online and all organisations are encouraged to use and share. Apart from the 80% funding from VOPs we would like to thank the Malta Bankers Association, Charles Degiorgio Ltd., Browns Pharma and Vivian Corporation for assisting in the co-financing of this project.

Meeting with Important Stakeholders:

The following important meetings were held with:

Hon Joe Etienne Abela Parl Secretary Active Aging and Consumer Affairs – 30th January 2023

Hon Graziella Galea Shadow Minister for Vol Organisations – 6th March 2023

Health CMO Mr Walter Busuttil – 4th January 2023

Ms Celia Falzon CEO MDH – October 2023

A virtual meeting was also held with MEP Mr Alex Agius Saliba.

Collaboration with other entities:

MCAST once again we were invited and participated in Freshers' week in October. We invited members to share our stand at MCAST. Some member organisations who participated had their own stand. Others chose to share with our stand: National Alliance Rare Disease Malta, Transplant Support Malta, SOS Malta, ADHD Malta, Europa Donna Malta, Richmond Foundation, Malta Mental Health Association, Caritas Epilepsy Malta.

Med-Tech World Summit 2023: Gertrude Buttigieg was invited to represent MHN at the Med-Tech World summit 2023 Malta in October. Unfortunately, GB did not attend for panel due to an injury. We also gave members the opportunity to attend for free however it seems that not many took up this offer.

Ministry for Health – we were invited to attend for Closing Conference of ESF 04.084 – Reform in the public health system to maximize efficiency gains and enhance governance, held in May 2023. GB attended and expressed the lack of patient representation during the project.

We have kept our relationship with the Malta Medicines Authority and explored collaboration with Mater Dei Hospital – mainly in providing feedback should issues arise – mostly to improve things which are meaningful to patients not really operational issues such as waiting lists etc.

ACF NGO Malta Programme: Through the Bilateral Cooperation Initiatives offered an opportunity to participate in Oslo Freedom Forum, in June. George Sultana attended on behalf of MHN.

Health Technology Assessment: European Commission's Directorate General for Health and Food Safety and the Heads of HTA Agencies Group (HAG), together with national HTA agencies invited representative from MHN to participate at an event in October 2023 in Spain as part of project between Malta, Spain, Portugal and Italy to discuss the topic of Understanding key elements of the EU HTA Regulation, Challenges and opportunities in the implementation process, Involving stakeholders in EU HTA implementation. GB attended for event together with other Maltese delegates from the Ministry for Health.

Visibility on the Local level

ARTICLES FOR MALTA INDEPENDENT

MHN is also still monitoring, the submission of Articles being sent by our members for onward print in the Malta Independent newspaper. Articles by the following organisations: Caritas Epilepsy Assoc Malta, SOS Malta, Karl Vella Foundation Malta, Association of Public Health Medicine, Europa Donna Malta, Malta Assoc of Occupational Therapists, Multiple Sclerosis Society, Malta Dementia Association were published in 2023 – copies of these are all available on our website.

Our website is maintained as regularly as possible. As MHN we kept posting events of member organisations -when we are informed or get to know of these events. These are included on our website calendar and disseminating this information via email. There were almost 60 events published and circulated to members these included posts and emails published by the

following organisations: ARAM, Dementia Association, Europa Donna Malta, Mental Health Association, Hospice Malta, Friends of Attard Hospital Association, and ADHD Malta.

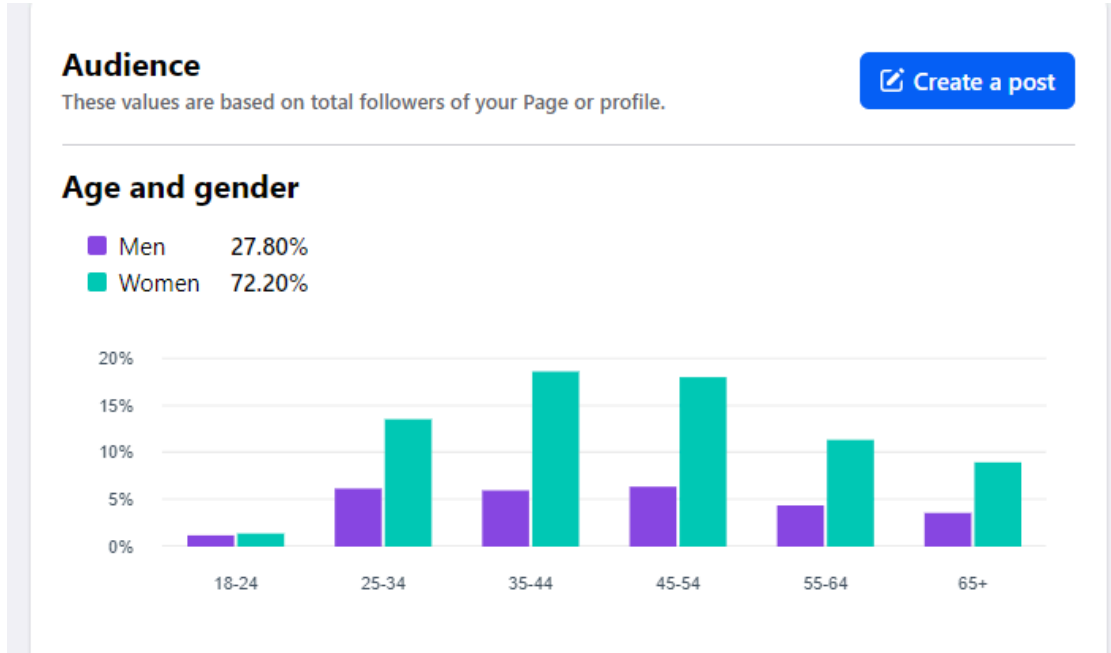


Table 1: Demographic data of people who follow MHN Facebook page by gender

Location	Towns/cities	Countries
	Birkirkara, Central Region, Malta	65
Mosta, Northern Region, Malta	61	
Naxxar, Northern Region, Malta	53	
Rabat, Central Region, Malta	47	
San Pawl il-Baħar, Northern Region, Malta	47	
Attard, Central Region, Malta	45	
Sliema, Central Region, Malta	43	
Zurrieq, South Eastern Region, Malta	43	
San Gwann, Central Region, Malta	40	
Zebbug, Central Region, Malta	38	

Table 2: Demographic data of people who follow MHN Facebook page by locality

MHN Projects in collaboration with Foreign entities

Erasmus+ project on Managing chronic conditions at the workplace: Following partnership with the Spanish Platform for Patients Organisations in an ERASMUS+ project we fully implemented the project. This involved a focus group with different patients and then guidelines was developed. Project closed in February 2023, during the year we promoted the project at various meetings and events we participated in.

SIP Malta SIP Platform/SIP Malta: Still participating in online meetings by SIP EU To keep working on Digital Health/ ICD-11 – European Health Data Space, Pain and Mental Health and Access to Treatment.

Hosted: AGM & annual training event of the European Liver Patients’

Association. Following contact with ELPA built over 2023, though we do not have Liver Patients’ support group in Malta, they chose to hold their annual event in Malta to raise awareness on the topic in Malta and hopefully a support group is set up. This is also a wish of the Hon JoEtienne Abela – we see if a support group which brings together digestive conditions can be set up in Malta.

European Patient Academy for Therapeutic Innovation (EUPATI):

MHN has kept it’s commitment in the EUPATI as one of our projects. We kept participating in online meetings but hope to be able to organise more events locally.

MHN affiliations and collaboration with foreign entities

European Patients Forum (EPF): MHN has kept its membership in EPF thanks to the support received through Civil Society Funds. Demis Cachia represented MHN at EPF AGM held in Brussels. This year we sent a Young patient, Sam Delia, to represent MHN the STYPA event held in July 2023 where young patients attended summer camp – this learn it focused on shortages of medicines and how to work with various stakeholders in order to address this matter. We submitted 2 nominations for the EPF youth group however none of the Maltese nominees was chosen.

Active Citizenship Network (ACN):

During this year MHN was informed on various initiatives by ACN – one of which is the Vaccination campaign which MHN participated in through posting information on social media. Several information was passed on to members to participate in several online training events as part of projects by ACN – these included events about Maximizing the societal benefit and lasting impact of clinical trials. Increasing stakeholder engagement and empowering participants to FACILITATE the effective return and reuse of clinical trial data and various seminars on different aspects of Health Literacy.

European Public Health Alliance (EPHA):

MHN has kept its membership in EPHA thanks to the support received through Civil Society Funds. Dr Christine Baluci has been delegated the task of following on meetings & activities of

EPHA. However MHN is also actively participating in 2 new working groups set up by EPHA – The Digital Cluster which is being followed by Ms Marcelline Warrington and the Politics and Advocacy meetings which are being followed by Mr George Sultana.

The AMR Patient Group is an initiative by Health First Europe and is comprised of national patient associations from across Europe. Dr Godwin Micallef represents MHN on the AMR Patient Group..

International Alliance for Patients Organisations (IAPO): – we maintained the membership and throughout the year we have sent out the IAPO newsletter to members. This contained several interesting articles and links to webinars held all over the World covering different topics from patient safety to HIV and diabetes. So the topics are very varied and members are encouraged to disseminate the information to join according to their interest.

Volonteurope we maintained our membership thanks to CVS funds by MCVS. Followed AGM online.

World Patients Alliance: MHN kept its membership in the WPA. We regularly receive invitation for online events which are then disseminated to members.

The Future

1. With funds obtained through the SISs through MCVS we shall be doing a phase 2 follow-up from the VOPs project by printing the information so as to have information to be disseminated in paper not only social media.
2. Patients' Rights will remain on our agenda and we hope to hold a seminar April
3. We will work together with members to disseminate the Position Paper 2024 mostly with policy makers including New Minister for Health, Shadow Minister and other policy makers.
4. We have been asked by University of Malta and other local organisations to participate as partners or collaborators in EU Funded projects. So far all projects are at proposal stages but if there will be any positive outcomes we look forward to strengthening the position of MHN and always have a stronger voice for patients.