

Annual Report 2011

Our First year

Being newly established, the organisation's priority was to undertake an exercise of self-identification & self-discovery.

As aditus foundation's first Chairperson, I am extremely happy to share the events and efforts that shaped the organisation's first year. In March 2011 three young lawyers agreed to establish aditus as a voluntary and non-profit organisation that would look at human rights in Malta for a specific perspective: access.

We recognised the great work already being done by several specialised NGOs, so decided to move away from a thematic NGO to a more general approach to human rights, one that would be in a position to look into access levels from a broader perspective. Being lawyers, we chose to give aditus a legal flavour with a focus on advocacy and legal enforcement of human rights.

Throughout 2011 we strived towards shaping aditus along these lines, ensuring this theme in the activities we organised and participated in.

With our statutes & vision as starting point, we sought to identify those key horizontal and vertical areas where our contribution & expertise would be more effective & sustainable. It was a process largely dependent on our existing networks of individual & institutional partners.

Effective liaison with national & international media actors was also a key element of our 2011 priorities, seen as a central tool in securing the organisation's public profile & support for our human rights efforts.

As a first year, 2011 was a very successful one for aditus. We participated and organised several projects, and were able to place the organisation at the heart of national discussions on a number of important human rights discussions. This is the vision we will keep pursuing in the coming year.

Dr. Nicola Mallia
Chairperson

Contents

Our First Year	1
Projects & Activities	
On-Going	2
Legal Information & Advice	2
EASO Monitor Blog	2
Institutional Relations & Advocacy	2
Specific Projects	3, 4
Public Awareness	
Press Statements	5
Seminars & Conferences	5
Television & Radio	5
Internet & Social Media	5
Management & Administrative	
Recruitment	6
Membership & Affiliation	7
Finances & Accounts	7

Background

Accessing human rights

aditus was established in March 2011 by a group of young lawyers interested in contributing to human rights access in Malta.

aditus is an independent, voluntary & non-profit organisation established with a view to monitor, act & report on access to fundamental human rights by individuals & groups.

Principles

Universality, interdependence & indivisibility of all human rights, & strive to promote their rights-based understanding & application.

Malta, but not only

aditus is focused on Malta, yet we work towards highlighting the regional & international dimensions of human rights in the country.

Legal Information & Advice

Provision of *pro bono* legal services – this is one of aditus' core activities whereby we offer legal information & advice to individuals or groups requiring clarification, support or guidance.

Throughout 2011, individual support was offered, on a *pro bono* basis to a number of refugees, asylum-seekers in the context of either the national asylum procedure or of other legal scenarios such as detention, employment, etc.

These activities were largely undertaken in partnership with the Jesuit Refugee Service (Malta).

Legal information & advice was also provided to a number of persons seeking clarification on their rights as members of the LGBTI community, on issues such as legal recognition of same-sex couples, immigration, transgender, etc.

We cooperated closely with the Malta Gay Rights Movement (MGRM) for the provision of these legal services.

Institutional Relations & Advocacy

Substantial energy was devoted towards the establishment of institutional relations in the various areas of activity. Building aditus' profile required the consolidation of various networks of governmental, inter-governmental and non-governmental organisations with a view to positioning aditus as a key player in these networks.

As highlighted in our Statutes, although aditus' focus is the situation of human rights access in Malta, we are keen to explore and underline this situation within an international and regional context. In 2011 this emphasis was also seen in the profiles of organisations with which we worked and liaised, ranging from organisations based and operating at the national level, to EU networks and institutions and also to organisations working at the UN and international level.

We consider such partnerships to be central to our activities, not only in terms of the operational opportunities presented but also since they are a key tool towards our achievement of our advocacy goals.

EASO Monitor blog

On 16th January 2011, our Director published the first post of the *EASO Monitor*, a blog intended to provide updated information & comments on the Malta-based **European Asylum Support Office (EASO)**.

Since then, the blog has formally moved under aditus' coordination & become one of the organisation's main on-going activities.

With more than 200 posts, the blog has received over 100,000 page views from readers in Europe, the United States, Africa & Asia. In a matter of months, the *EASO Monitor* became & remains the main information point for individuals & agencies intent on following the EU's asylum agency.

As part of its efforts with the *EASO Monitor*, we held regular meetings with the Agency's Executive Director, Dr. Robert Visser, and also participated in its first Consultative Forum (December).

aditus is committed to maintaining the blog & to ensuring it remains relevant by providing constant updates as well as insights & commentaries.

During our first year of operation, we were involved in a number of human rights activities covering two main themes:

- Asylum & migration;
- Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender & Intersex (LGBTI).

Stakeholder Information Sessions

Type

Capacity-building

Organisers/Partners

aditus, with the support of UNHCR Office in Malta

Description

In this project, aditus provided training to service-providers in the community that encounter refugees on a regular basis.

The project's aims were to sustain refugee integration efforts and to improve access to entitlements by refugees by providing specialised and targeted training on asylum-related issues (definitions, rights/obligations, challenges, best practices, procedures, etc.).

A *Stakeholder Tool on Integration, Self-Reliance and Access to Services in Malta* was also produced and utilised in all training sessions.

The 2011 project formed the basis for the 2012 project.

Comparative study on best practices in the field of return of minors

Type

Report

Organisers/Partners

ECRE & Save the Children, aditus as Malta National Contact Point

Description

A research project producing a final [report](#) that includes a brief profile of the current legislation and administrative practices regarding the return process in the MS, and the reception of minors in the countries of return.

Ensuring a gender-sensitive approach to asylum

Type

Legal training

Organisers/Partners

aditus, with ILGA-Europe, European Women's Lobby, Amnesty International's END FGM European Campaign, Asylum Aid (UK)

Description

A technical legal training seminar provided to staff of Malta's Office of the Refugee Commissioner (national asylum authority), covering gender issues within the asylum procedure such as FGM, LGBTI applicants, procedural issues, etc. The event was organised and funded in the context of the *Fleeing Homophobia* project (below) and addressed approximately 20 staff members.

Meet the Other

Type

Community-based research

Organisers/Partners

aditus & UNHCR Office in Malta

Description

A project involving a series of interviews with refugees & beneficiaries of subsidiary protection living in the Maltese community, with the aim of analysing their integration levels and better understand their conditions, challenges, experiences and quality of life. The 2011 project was a preparatory phase for a more extensive *Meet the Other* project in 2012.

Engendering the Common European Asylum System – Challenges & Opportunities

Type

Seminar

Organisers/Partners

aditus, with ILGA-Europe, European Women's Lobby, Amnesty International's END FGM European Campaign, Asylum Aid (UK)

Description

A seminar discussing key gender elements within the asylum procedure, with a particular focus on the Common European Asylum System (CEAS). The approximately 60 participants included academics, asylum NGOs, LGBTI NGOs, women's rights NGOs, social workers, government officials. The event was organised and funded in the context of the 'Fleeing Homophobia' project, below.

International Human Rights & Migration

Type

Training seminars (2)

Organisers/Partners

aditus, with International Commission of Jurists, UNHCR Office in Malta

Description

Two training events, one targeting stakeholders working in the field of migration/asylum and the other attracting a broader group of organisations. Topics covered included general human rights principles, international refugee law, human rights in Malta, detention of migrants, and economic, social and cultural rights. The events were organised with the support of the European Commission Representation in Malta.

Projects & Activities (specific)

Legislation, practical cooperation, solidarity: NGO perspectives from Malta

Type

Seminar (World Refugee Day)

Organisers/Partners

aditus, JRS Malta, with guest speakers from UNHCR and ECRE

Description

A seminar focusing on a non-governmental perspective of the Common European Asylum System (CEAS), with particular attention to issues affecting Malta.

Organised with the support of the European Commission Representation in Malta.

Fleeing Homophobia: Seeking Safety in Europe

Type

Report

Organisers/Partners

VU University of Amsterdam, COC Netherlands, aditus as Malta research organisation

Description

EU-wide research project with the aim of identifying best practices in the handling of LGBTI asylum cases, and to make EU policy recommendations.

The project report was presented at a conference in September 2011, and can be downloaded [here](#).

Améliorer la mise en oeuvre du droit d'asile pour les mineurs isolés étrangers dans l'Union européenne

Type

Report

Organisers/Partners

France terre d'asile, aditus as Malta National Expert

Description

An EU-wide study with the overall goal of examining the procedures and practices in the 27 EU MS regarding access to asylum by third-country national separated and/or unaccompanied children. The project sought to identify obstacles and best practices with a view to highlighting the main elements of the current scenario and to remedying legal gaps.

Knowledge-based harmonisation of European asylum legislation through exchanging information and building on existing best practices

Type

Report, capacity-building

Organisers/Partners

Hungarian Helsinki Committee, aditus as Malta research organisation

Description

The project aimed to explore the national implementation of asylum-related judgements of the Court of Justice of the European Union (CJEU), including national legislation, jurisprudence and policy developments interpreting or following these judgements. aditus also provided a training session on EASO to a group of legal professionals.

Enhancing Gender-Sensitivity & a Harmonised Approach to Gender Issues in European Asylum Practices in order to better identify & Serve the Needs of Vulnerable Asylum-Seekers (GENSEN)

Type

Report

Organisers/Partners

Comisión Espanola de Ayuda al Refugiado, aditus as Malta research assisting organisation

Description

A research project covering France, Spain, Italy, UK, Hungary, Portugal, Belgium, Malta, Sweden and Romania with the primary objective of contributing to the harmonisation of the operational implementation of the EU asylum legislation from a gender perspective, in order to enhance gender equality in the EU asylum procedures.

www.facebook.com/aditus.accessingrights

<https://twitter.com/#!/aditusNGO>

Television | Radio

Together with the above public statements and expressions of concern/recommendations, 2011 also saw aditus make a number of appearances of television and radio programmes.

These appearances were made with the primary aim of disseminating information on the issues covered by aditus, but also to further strengthen the organisation's presence as a national focal point for human rights issues.

In this regard, aditus gave several interviews and commentaries and participated in a number of discussions on local and international media channels.

By the end of 2011, it was clear that aditus had established a solid presence amongst the local media as an objective interlocutor on key human rights concerns in Malta, particularly on the rights of migrants/refugees and of members of the LGBTI community.

The press statements represent aditus' public declaration of principle, and provide an insight into our priorities and thematic areas of interest and expertise.

Press Statements

aditus issued a number of press statements to the media highlighting a range of human rights concerns and recommendations.

Many of these statements were issued together with other organisations, whilst aditus acted alone on a number of occasions.

The following are the statements issued by aditus in 2011. Individual comments and other media relations are not included under this sub-heading.

- Incorrect transposition of EU Freedom of Movement Directive, together with MGRM (12th April);
- Malta's Constitutional Court denies the right to marry to a transgender woman (23rd May);
- Alternatives to detention must be explored (3rd June);
- Refugees should be at the heart of asylum policies as this is the only real way to ensure the full respect of their human dignity, together with JRS Malta (20th June);
- Prompt disembarkation should never be prejudiced (14th July);
- On the Safi riot (18th August);
- The correct transposition of the EU's Freedom of Movement Directive, together with MGRM (23rd August);
- The National Anti-Trafficking Action Plan will strengthen the protection of trafficking victims (7th October);
- Amendment to legislation in respect of transgender persons, together with MGRM (10th November);
- A victory for the right to seek asylum (1st December).

Internet & Social Media

aditus immediately acknowledged the Internet's potential as a powerful tool in disseminating information, raising public awareness, gathering advocacy support and establishing contacts with individuals and networks.

The website was immediately created, providing basic information on the organisation and our activities. Together with the site, we sought to make full use of social media applications and networks through the aditus Facebook page and our very active Twitter feed.

Throughout all of 2011 these online tools have complemented our activities by providing coverage, sharing interesting and relevant news with our followers and further moulding the organisation's profile.

Our 2011 priorities focused on the organisation's establishment in accordance with applicable local legislation. Starting off as a Voluntary Organisation registered with the Malta Commissioner for Voluntary Organisations (CVO), towards the end of the year we converted aditus to a registered foundation, maintaining our registration with the CVO due to our profile as non-profit and voluntary.

Registration enables aditus to access public funding opportunities, whilst highlighting the transparency and accountability of all our activities.

In accordance with our Statutes, one of our Founding Members was appointed Director and, as such, is responsible for the day-to-day management of the organisation's work on a voluntary basis.

aditus is currently run by the following persons:

- Dr. Nicola Mallia, Chairperson;
- Dr. Carla Camilleri, Executive Secretary;
- Dr. Neil Falzon, Director.

Recruitment

Employment of staff was limited to project-based human resources on a part-time basis with aditus not in a financial position to recruit any staff members on a full-time basis.

In order to implement our activities, we initiated a campaign for the recruitment of volunteers and successfully attracted a group of 10 persons who voluntarily and freely offered their time towards achieving our project goals. 1 of these volunteers was an Austrian national, coming to Malta for an internship with the organisation.

Due to limited resources, aditus was unable to offer internship and volunteering opportunities to all those interested persons who approached us.

Membership & Affiliation

In 2011 aditus became a member of the **International Detention Coalition**.

We also initiated membership discussions with the **Platform for International Cooperation on Undocumented Migrants (PICUM)** as well as with the **European Council on Refugees and Exiles (ECRE)**.

What is aditus?

aditus was established in March 2011 by a group of young lawyers interested in contributing to human rights access in Malta.

According to our statutes, aditus is an independent, voluntary & non-profit organisation established with a view to monitor, act & report on access to fundamental human rights by individuals & groups.

We believe in the universality, interdependence & indivisibility of all human rights, & strive to promote their rights-based understanding & application.

aditus is focused on Malta, yet we work towards highlighting the regional & international dimensions of human rights in the country.

aditus is a non-profit voluntary organisation and, as such, we rely on voluntary contributions and other public funding resources in order to reach our goals.

Active participation in EU-funded projects, and activities funded by other public sources is therefore a key priority for the organisation.

These are the organisation's accounts for the period 30th March - 31st December 2011:

Income

Donations	766.00
Project Funds	6,140.00
Interest Received	1.00
TOTAL	6,907

Expenditure

Project Expenses	1,258.00
Salary	4,900.00
Printing & Stationary	59.00
Audit Fee	420.00
Bank Charges	7.00
Registration Fee	35.00
TOTAL	6,679

Period Surplus

228

aditus
accessing rights

149,
Old Mint Street,
Valletta VLT 1513,
Malta

+356 2010 6295