

ElenaFlavia Castagnino Berlinghieri

Motivation Letter for UWE Board of Vice-President Candidacy

Dear UWE Board Members,

after careful consideration I am writing to outline my motivation to stand as a member of the Board of UWE and how I believe I can contribute to the work and success of it.

Find attached a brief summary of my biographical details and CV which I trust provide a flavour of the experience I would bring to the Board.

- Although my background and research interests doesn't fit exactly with gender issues, my **extensive research-teaching experience** and my involvement in EU projects, which are mainly focused on archaeology and cultural heritage, **provides a useful link between EU world and socio-cultural fields, encouraging interdisciplinary research and education relationships.**
- As an Italian citizen living and working in **Sicily, in a multicultural setting right in the middle of the Mediterranean sea**, I believe I can contribute actively to the great work undertaken by the Board to promote **international cooperation between professional woman, peace and respect for human rights** for all in public and private life.
- Throughout my professional career I always worked hard to research and to promote **cultural heritage in the European Region both in my national as well as international jobs**, both at academic (various universities) or governmental levels (e.g. Ministry of Education, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Regione Sicilia).
- It has always been a strong motivation for me to promote extended life expectancy and improved cultural heritage status to capitalise on the opportunities created by a significant talent pool and **to contribute to the enchantment of international agreements and commitments.**
- In all my teachings, I promote interdisciplinary study as a means to comprehending larger cultural shifts. **I believe strongly in the value of in-depth analysis of particular sources as a means of understanding the complex**, often contradicting culture meanings embedded in each source.
- This is true when – among others – I guide the **implementation of research's programmes**, as organiser and scientific coordinator, which aims **to improve European relationships** by researching and disseminating new results on archaeology and cultural heritage, and thus to close the gap that currently exists between indicators in my country and the EU average.
- The other aspect of my present job – as Archaeologist in permanent position at the Regione Sicilia (2004-present) working for the Service for the Protection of Archaeological Heritage as well as being Expert-Archaeologist for the Standing Committee for the Euro Mediterranean Partnership for Local and Regional Authorities (COPPEM) for EU integration - helps me to keep abreast of **developments within the EU by preparing for and attending international meetings**, conferences, representing my country in the High-Level Group on Cultural and Social Services which greatly contribute to the effective promotion of the country.
- Moreover during my years in FILDIS (affiliated IFUW and UWE), the promotion of **international cooperation, harmony and respect for human rights as well as integration of people with any form of disabilities**, was one of the main priorities of our programme and therefore I was heavily involved in managing and coordinating these activities at the operational level. Among collaborative efforts between Institutions and the local community through FILDIS, Siracusa branch, I encouraged the ongoing agreement with the International Superior Institute of Criminal Science (ISISC), the

National Institute of Social Care (INPDAP) and Anti-violence non-profit centres, the *Jubilee Sailing Trust*.

- While volunteering with FILDIS, I was involved at the strategic level to develop the Organizations' response and also strengthen partnership (i.e. **2011 Protocol between Italy and France**) inside and outside the organization with the aim of working on **gender equality** as well as **focusing on specific problems like femicide, disabilities, integration, promoting culture for all and inspiring woman and girls to apply their knowledge in leadership and decision making in all forms of lifetime**.
- I am firmly convinced that currently huge resources exist in Europe to deal with socio-cultural issues especially devoted to woman: institutions, laboratories, experts, networks in Member States, at the level of the EU, but the coordination, harmonization, integration of their work is not optimal yet and therefore **further synergy is needed to maximize all these efforts**.

Summing up, I am motivated to put forward my candidacy for two main reasons.

First, like most professional woman involved in the mainstream of the socio-cultural world, I would like to help make UWE and related European-association the best it can be.

Second, I have spent the past 30 years in international development work focused on cultural heritage and archaeological research in some of the world's more challenging, yet also inspiring, environments i.e. Sicily, Turkey, Reign of Morocco, Greece, Aeolian Islands, Canary Islands, Spain, along with Italy and Great Britain where I received my professional background.

I would like to bring bear my **cross-disciplinary experience to help UWE in the main challenges and issues of our time especially linked with the woman world** to prevent and combat violence against women, in a world which nowadays still often faces barriers to participation in all aspects of society, including education, employment, wellness, leisure, collective participation. I strongly believe that any of these barriers are due to ignorance and negative attitudes and that the most effective ways to change such unconstructive approaches is through enhancing cooperation and direct interaction at European Level. This is the reason why, within our FILDIS' social activities, I contributed to highlight the significance of the **Council of Europe Strategy on Gender Equality (2014-2017)** and the "**Istanbul Convention**" as the most far-reaching international treaty to tackle violence against women in Europe.

It is very important for me to create organizational environments which are conducive to the **promotion of gender equality, as well as to identify and remove barriers that prevents woman and girls from reaching their maximum potential**.

It would be an honour for me to use my skills, experiences and partnerships for the benefit of UWE.

I appreciate your consideration and would be happy to discuss with you all.

Sincerely,
ElenaFlavia Castagnino Berlinghieri

Siracusa, 29 July 2014

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