**Women’s International Democratic Federation – *update September 2020***

The European section of the Women’s International Democratic Federation (WIDF) has held two meetings during the summer period, on 25 July and 30 August. Coming together online made for good attendance, with both vice-presidents for Europe present – Skevi Koukouma (Cyprus) and Ada Donno Nocera (Italy) – and women’s organisations from Britain (NAW), Cyprus, Greece, Iran, Italy, Portugal, Russia, and Turkey. It was good to see all the sisters and know that they had kept safe and well.

The current situation, especially the impact of Covid-19, was discussed on both occasions. Speaker after speaker set out the dire situation in her country, particularly for women. Common themes were job losses, poverty, lack of services, sharply rising levels of domestic violence against women and children and the urgent need for and welfare support for women.

There was much concern about the ramping up of dangerous imperialist warmongering and aggression during the COVID period, especially in the Eastern Mediterranean. The catastrophic impact of sanctions on the people of the countries affected was highlighted. Several organisations, the NAW included, talked about the huge sums that were being spent on arms which could be spent on meeting needs and building peace.

A statement from WIDF Europe, based on our deliberations, will be issued in late September. Wide dissemination is planned. Our two vice-presidents are working on a circulation list to include various UN bodies.

Both summer meetings discussed the role of the Cuban doctors in supporting the peoples of countries hit by the current pandemic and other epidemics, such as Ebola. WIDF Europe is supporting the campaign for Cuban doctors to be awarded the Nobel Peace Prize.

We were also updated on plans for next year’s WIDF World Congress. It will take place, all being well, in the middle of 2021 in Venezuela. Holding the event there is a gesture of solidarity on the part of the WIDF. The Secretariat will meet shortly, after which more details will be issued.

*Liz Payne, NAW EC*