

MONDAY 22 JUNE 2015

Excellency

It is indeed an honour for me to be present for the official inauguration, of the naming of part of the extensive Strasbourg Waterfronts, as *QUAI DE MALTE*, to mark the 50th Anniversary since Malta joined the Council of Europe.

It was in 1965 that Malta made its definitive presence in the City of Strasbourg. Just a few months after becoming a sovereign and independent state in 1964, Malta was accepted as the 18th full member state, to join the Council of Europe, and this when, the number of full members today, has gone up to 47 States.

My presence here, in fact, coincides with the holding of a number of events marking this momentous anniversary, following an invitation on the part of Mme. Anne Brasseur, the current Chairperson of the Parliamentary Assembly.

I too belonged to the Parliamentary Assembly until a few years ago, as parliamentary representative forming part of the Malta Delegation to PACE.

For this reason, it was an honour for me to be invited to address the Parliamentary Assembly today, as Head of State of my country.

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Apart from this, I would like to add that bilateral relations between Malta and France, have along the years been extensive, varied and eventful.

There was even a short period in our history, when Malta was occupied by France, following a military invasion led by General Bonaparte in 1798.

Another testimony of the link between Malta and France is that of Valletta, our capital city, which is named after its founder, Jean de Valette, who was at the time the Grandmaster of the Order of St. John, and who was a Frenchman.

Finally, we are pleased to note that following a joint request on the part of Malta's Permanent Representation to the Council of Europe, and the Honorary Consul of Malta for the Region of Alsace, the Municipal authorities have decided to accede to the request to name part of Strasbourg Waterfronts, after Malta.

Today we are here to assist to its inauguration.

We are deeply grateful for this.

Thank you.