

**CIDIC Speech, 21 April 2017**

**[Salutations]**

**It is my pleasure to address this distinguished delegation, representing the International Circle for Diplomats and Consuls, and your collaborators.**

**I am very proud of all the nominees, whose work in the sectors of economic growth, social initiatives, and the Arts have had such a positive impact across diverse communities in my country and in Europe. Let me take this opportunity to commend you on your endeavours.**

**For those of you who have never visited Malta before, allow me, also, to once again extend a warm welcome on your first visit to our islands.**

**Malta may be a small country, but our position at the heart of the Mediterranean Sea places us at the crossroads of continents and cultures.**

**Malta's geo-strategic reality has always given us a unique role in the history, both ancient and contemporary, of the Euro-Mediterranean region.**

**This role is particularly clear during Malta's ongoing Presidency of the Council of the European Union, and also in our long-term efforts to be bridge-builders for sustainable peace among diverse groups, communities, and nations.**

**I am informed that an important focus, during your visit, was to strengthen contacts with various policy-makers, high-level institutions, non-governmental organisations, and entrepreneurs in Malta.**

**It is this quality of connection, which is forward-looking and geared towards collaboration, that I hope we shall continue to develop among our European family of nations.**

**Just as the CIDIC provides opportunities for people from different academic and professional backgrounds to meet and share their work and their aspirations for the future, so too must we continue to nurture greater synergies between all stakeholders in Malta, in the European Union, and beyond.**

**I am confident that your presence has served to stimulate further connections with your colleagues here in Malta, thereby increasing the potential for networking and collaboration across various sectors of mutual interest.**

**I believe that the efforts of the CIDIC, which are built on diplomatic, business, and academic interests, offer a direct parallel with the synergies we must continue to strengthen between our European countries in the key areas of social and economic development.**

**I believe that where there is dialogue through diplomacy, there is also shared prosperity through economic and social connections.**

**I also believe that when economies work in cooperation, there are opportunities for deep-rooted cultural exchanges through academic collaboration.**

**Subsequently, there is also the potential for strength through solidarity, upon which our European Union was founded, and from which it derives its lasting mandate to achieve positive peace among the nations of Europe.**

**I believe we must stand firm in our commitment to solidarity, by creating greater closeness across all spheres of economic and**

**political contact, and also prioritising and promoting our efforts to secure meaningful social inclusion within the Union.**

**As we all know, this is a key thematic area for the Maltese Presidency of the Council, and of growing importance during these times of global uncertainty.**

**We must never forget that an inclusive Europe is a resilient Europe.**

**Europe must be strong within itself, but it must also be stronger with its partners outside our Union. We must reach out, responding to the phenomenon of globalisation with a global social solidarity approach.**

**Let us work together to ensure that Europe continues to be a model of human rights, freedoms, and solidarity in our world.**

**Furthermore, our respect for the participation and inclusion of each and every member of our European and global family is direct evidence of the dedication we feel, to safeguard the dignity of all.**

**In conclusion, let me say that I am proud of the heritage we all hold so dear.**

**Just as visitors from our nations explore the specific histories and the rich legacies of our respective countries, so too are they encouraged to discover the things which we hold in common and which unite us together.**

**Namely, these are our common regard for democratic participation; our mutual belief in the rule of law, of just governance, and of human dignity; and our shared commitment to build a global culture of positive peace, for the benefit of present and future**

**generations in Malta, throughout our European Union, and across our world.**

**Thank you.**