

**SPEECH BY H.E. MARIE LOUISE COLEIRO PRECA,
PRESIDENT OF MALTA, AT THE CRYSTAL PALACE BALLET
PERFORMANCE ON THE OCCASION OF THE 50th
ANNIVERSARY OF THE ESTABLISHMENT OF DIPLOMATIC
RELATIONS BETWEEN THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION AND
THE REPUBLIC OF MALTA**

FRIDAY 21 JULY 2017

Excellency

Distinguished guest

Dear friends

Let me begin by thanking His Excellency, the Ambassador of the Russian Federation, for his kind remarks, on the occasion of the celebration of the 50th Anniversary since diplomatic relations were officially established between Malta and Russia.

It is truly my pleasure to be with you for this event.

Tonight's special performance is a memorable opportunity, for many individuals to showcase their talents and skills. In the process, these talented young people have created a beautiful display of collaboration, between Maltese and Russian dancers and musicians.

I believe that tonight's performance reflects the warm friendship that exists, between our two countries. This is a friendship which we must keep strengthening, among the diverse communities of our respective nations.

Although we are celebrating fifty years since official relations were established between Malta and Russia, I must remind us that the ties between our two peoples go back many centuries.

It is ever since the Knights of the Order of St John came to Malta, in the 1500s, that we have enjoyed stable relations, which have grown stronger over time.

Today, the connections between Malta and Russia are a source of opportunity and respect. Therefore, I believe that we must continue, through opportunities such as tonight's performance, to encourage further processes of social sharing and cultural diplomacy.

I would like to encourage us, to keep working together to promote new and innovative strategies, to further explore the rich heritage of our respective nations.

For this reason, let me take this time to commend the work that is being carried out by the Russian Centre for Science and Culture, in Malta.

I am pleased to note that the Russian Centre has hosted various initiatives over the years, emphasising processes of cultural diplomacy, to bring our respective communities together.

We must keep on building new opportunities, to promote deep-rooted connections, while nurturing the healthy relations that exist between the peoples of Malta and Russia.

Let me conclude with a quotation from one of the foremost dancers of all time, the Russian ballerina Anna Pavlova, who said that;

“The right to happiness is fundamental.”

Let us use all our abilities to ensure that happiness, peace, and prosperity are the lasting legacy which we hand down to our future generations.

I augur that such a commitment, to the building of happiness, peace, and prosperity, shall be a source of mutual strength, uniting our two peoples for many years to come.

Thank you for your attention, and please enjoy the rest of your evening.