

## **Press Statement at the end of Arraiolos Malta 2017**

**It was truly a pleasure to welcome my colleagues to the thirteenth meeting of the Arraiolos Group. Let me take this opportunity, as the host of this year's meeting, to thank them for their constructive and insightful contributions during our two discussion sessions.**

**I must also thank Professor Carmelo Borg and Professor Stephen Calleya, for facilitating our sessions, and the team at my Office who contributed to the successful organisation of this meeting. Let me also take a moment to recognise the excellent work of the media, who have helped to convey the important message of this meeting, thus giving it more visibility.**

**On the other hand, this thirteenth meeting of the Arraiolos Group in Malta has been another testament to the frankness and openness that exists among the Non-Executive Presidents of the European Union. Throughout the Arraiolos Malta 2017, we have created opportunities for sharing and to sensitise one another to our respective situations. It was also an opportunity to nurture and enhance the strong friendships that already exist among our family of nations.**

**From my point of view, our meeting has truly been a positive experience, giving visibility to the social issues of Europe, in the strongest possible way. We have highlighted the most important issues of social justice, such as poverty, including the working poor**

**and the alarming realities of child poverty in Europe, with indicators which tell us that some 26% of children in the EU are living at risk of poverty and social exclusion.**

**Moreover, it became clear that we must further our efforts, to make an effective investment in our young people, in relation to issues of employment. In this way, we shall continue to address growing concerns of precarity within our nations.**

**I believe that, in all our efforts, we cannot simply rest on economic growth. To ensure that no one is left behind, we must make an equal effective investment in the wellbeing of our peoples. I am convinced that we need a global social solidarity approach, which parallels the work being done to develop the economic sectors of our nations.**

**In this way, we shall be putting into action the mandate of the United Nations' Agenda 2030 and its seventeen Sustainable Development Goals.**

**Furthermore, there must be more investment, on behalf of Europe, in the security of the Euro-Mediterranean Region. There can be no positive peace in our European Union without strongly promoting and prioritising the stability and harmony of the Mediterranean area.**

**In order to ensure the continued prosperity and security of Europe, we must make a clear investment in the Southern Mediterranean, with particular emphasis on Northern and Sub-Saharan Africa.**

**Through legal channels of migration, and an investment in processes of democratic participation within these nations, we shall be protecting the dignity of our brothers and sisters in the region, while ensuring the sustainable wellbeing of our European Union.**