

**Your Excellency, I thank you for your warm welcome and kind words. I am pleased to participate in today's commemoration of the National Day of German Unity, and to celebrate the meaningful friendship that exists between our peoples.**

**In my name, and on behalf of the Government and the People of Malta, please convey my congratulations to His Excellency President Steinmeier, and to the Government and People of Germany.**

**Let me also take this opportunity to congratulate Her Excellency, Chancellor Merkel, for her recent success. Entering a fourth term at the helm of the largest economy of Europe, and one of the world's most influential countries, Chancellor Merkel is a role model to others, and especially to our girls and young women.**

**Relations between Malta and the Federal Republic of Germany have gone from strength-to-strength, since diplomatic relations were first established between our countries in 1964.**

**Relations have been strengthened at every level of engagement, including community-based initiatives as well as high-level exchanges.**

**Indeed, it was an honour to welcome President Steinmeier at this year's Arraiolos Meeting, held last month, here in Malta. It was reassuring to discuss and share information with fellow non-executive European Presidents, about so many topics of mutual concern.**

**These included issues of social justice; the phenomenon of migration; the importance of the Mediterranean region to achieve European security; and strategies for sustaining the holistic wellbeing of our entire family of nations.**

**At the heart of our concerns, my colleagues and I expressed the urgent need, that together with economic globalisation we need to create a global social solidarity approach, which embraces the concerns and aspirations of all the communities and peoples in our countries, and across our European Union.**

**I am convinced that Malta and Germany are united in the mutual pursuit of this shared goal, which is to say, the promotion of European solidarity within a stronger and more interconnected family of nations.**

**Thanks to the relationship between our two countries, we are working towards this goal, by fostering collaborative processes of social, cultural, political, and economic development.**

**Such collaboration is particularly important in the sectors of education, healthcare, investment, business, and trade. Let us therefore look forward, to explore further possibilities to evolve our present exchanges, while capitalising on new opportunities.**

**I am pleased to note that bilateral trade between us is vigorous, with figures for trade standing at 330 million euros, for the first five months of 2017.**

**The track record of German investment in Malta is also a success story.**

**German investment in Malta is evidence of the strong investment potential that our islands represent, and a clear expression of the confidence that exists between our respective business communities, and our nations.**

**Tourism is another strong sector in Malta. Travel flows between Malta and Germany are significant, and also increasing. Last year, in terms of educational tourism, German students represented 14.2 percent of total incoming students, learning English as a foreign language.**

**This focus on the importance of education is also evident in Germany's continuing sponsorship of a Chair for Peace Studies and Conflict Prevention, within the Mediterranean Academy for Diplomatic Studies at the University of Malta.**

**Cultural cooperation is another key component in the friendship that exists between us.**

**Over the years, there have been a number of initiatives highlighting the cultural closeness we both feel. Most recently, these have included a screening of the Maltese film Simshar in Berlin, earlier this year.**

**The screening was followed by a discussion with director Ms. Rebecca Cremona, exploring the film's focus on questions of migration.**

**Let me also take this opportunity to commend Germany, for its ongoing contributions during the migration phenomenon being faced by European countries.**

**I must commend Germany for setting an example of solidarity to all Member States. At this uncertain time, we need more displays of such strong leadership.**

**For this reason, Chancellor Merkel's visit to Malta, for the Informal EU Heads of Government Summit, held in February of this year, was a valuable opportunity for such leadership to be shown.**

**I am pleased to note that this sentiment of solidarity and cooperation was clearly shown by the heads of both our governments.**

**Such cooperation and solidarity is particularly necessary, since the repercussions of increased migration are being felt across both our European and Mediterranean regions.**

**Above all, we must continue to address the humanitarian needs of migrants who are already in the European Union, as well as to implement strategies for their successful inclusion among our communities.**

**We must attend to the wellbeing of those individuals who are still risking their lives, in hope of a better future, and make more efforts to tackle the dangers being posed by traffickers and smugglers.**

**I must commend all efforts and initiatives being undertaken, to invest sustainably in countries of origin, so as to address poverty, precarity, and inequalities.**

**Let me also take this time to commend the excellent relations between Germany and Malta, during the Maltese Presidency of the Council of the European Union, when issues of migration were discussed at the highest levels.**

**It is to be hoped that the outcomes of these discussions will have an impact on the dialogue currently taking place, around the Global Compacts on Refugees and Migrants.**

**Ambassador, let me conclude by saying that Germany's National Unity Day is a perfect reflection of the desire, felt by all people of goodwill, to achieve a spirit of unity, of solidarity, and of peace.**

**These shared values are treasured by both our nations, and I trust that the friendship between our two countries will continue to flourish in the years ahead, guided by these same values.**

**Let us therefore raise our glasses, and toast to the health of His Excellency, President Steinmeier, and to the excellent relations between our two countries.**