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*Speech By H.E. Marie-Louise Coleiro Preca, President Of Malta At The  
Celebration Of The Chinese New Year, Organised By The Chinese Cultural  
Centre, In Aid Of The Malta Community Chest Fund Foundation*

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**MEDITERRANEAN CONFERENCE CENTRE, VALLETTA  
14TH FEBRUARY 2018**

**[Salutations]**

**Distinguished guests,  
Dear friends.**

**On behalf of the people of Malta, let me begin by conveying my best wishes for good health, peace and prosperity, to all the individuals, families, and communities who are celebrating Chinese New Year, in Malta, in China and around the world.**

**I am so pleased to join you, at this celebration of Chinese talent, creativity, and tradition.**

**Let me begin by commending the essential work of the Chinese Embassy, the Chinese Cultural Centre, and the Chinese Community Association in Malta, who are all working, in their own capacities, to keep strengthening the links between our diverse communities.**

**When we share our cultures and customs with one another, we are not simply commemorating the beginning of another year ..... We are also renewing, in a tangible way, our commitment to celebrate the rich diversity in the Maltese Islands.**

The respect we show one another, at such events, is proof of the great desire we all feel, to create sustainable peace and meaningful connections, in our lives, within our communities, and across our society.

I am informed that 2018 is the Chinese Year of the Dog. As I have read, the dog, in Chinese culture, is seen as a symbol of loyalty, devotion, and practicality. I would like to add that it is also a symbol of friendship. This should encourage us to continue to create opportunities for friendship. It is through friendship, that we can create a more harmonious and more resilient society.

Let me encourage everyone, to ensure that this new year takes us forward, by encouraging a spirit of active friendship and respectful dialogue, among our diverse communities, while also nurturing positive developments in all of our countries, across the world.

I would like to take this opportunity to address the Chinese community, here in Malta.

I must thank you, for your participation in our society. Your contributions are an essential part of our shared prosperity, and I regard you as valued contributors, to the ongoing success of our islands.

I must also take some time to commend the work that has been done, and continues to be done, to promote connections between Malta and China, through the teaching of the Chinese language at the University of Malta, and the many initiatives taken by the Chinese Cultural Centre in Valletta.

**I would like to encourage us all, to give importance to more strategies for social inclusion across our islands, so that the successes which your own community has achieved will be reflected in other communities.**

**In this way, we shall be taking practical strides forward, to ensure the dignity and prosperity of all the people that call Malta their home.**

**I would also like to take this opportunity to thank the Chinese Cultural Centre for taking the initiative to contribute to the Malta Community Chest Fund Foundation, and by showing practical solidarity to the many people that call upon our national charity, to alleviate their vulnerable situations.**

**On behalf of my husband and myself, I would like to convey our warmest wishes, to you and your families. May your New Year be filled with good health, peace, prosperity and wellbeing.**