
*Speech by H.E. Marie-Louise Coleiro Preca, President of Malta at a Diwali Gala
Dinner organized by the Maltese-Indian Community*

28th October 2017

It is my pleasure to join the Maltese-Indian Community at this joyful event, and to share a few words on the occasion of tonight's Diwali Gala Dinner.

As we all know, Diwali is the festival of lights, and is celebrated throughout India, and in other countries where members of the Indian diaspora have made their home.

Indeed, Diwali has become an internationally observed holiday, embraced by diverse communities all over the world.

I must note that Diwali is a colourful and lively celebration of life, which marks the victory of good over evil, and the triumph of light over darkness.

Furthermore, events such as this one are a reminder of the rich diversity of traditions that make up the fabric of Maltese society.

Malta has always been a place of connection for different peoples and cultures. In fact, the hardworking and peaceful participation of the Indian-Maltese community, in our Maltese Islands, is a living example of successful inclusion.

Therefore, I believe that we must continue to encourage such a spirit of inclusion, for the shared benefit of all of our communities.

In fact, the Mediterranean Region as a whole has always been a hub for connections and friendship-building between people of different cultures.

Therefore, the celebration of this festival serves to further enhance the links which are already in place, across our Maltese Islands, to create safe and respectful spaces for the participation of all, within Malta.

I believe that we must continue working together, to embrace the enrichment that such diversity makes possible, both in our nation, and across our region.

Diversity provides opportunities for local communities, visitors, and tourists, to all form meaningful connections and to create new relationships with each other.

In the process of building these friendships, we will also be contributing to an inclusive and participatory culture of positive peace.

Positive peace is the decision to keep finding opportunities, and implementing effective strategies, that promote much-needed processes of inclusion and active participation.

Let me also take this time to commend the Birgu Local Council and the Mediterranean Tourism Foundation, for their innovative vision, to present a Mediterranean Diwali Festival as part of the annual Birgufest event.

I would like to encourage you, as the Indian-Maltese community, to promote this project. You are best placed, thanks to your knowledge of Malta, to promote the Mediterranean Festival, which will help to create a valuable context for inter-cultural dialogue, by encouraging greater sharing between our respective cultures.

Furthermore, it is another example of the Mediterranean Tourism Foundation putting its commitment, to highlight peaceful processes of dialogue and inclusion, into practical action.

Let me conclude by encouraging everyone, to continue to be guided by the values of inclusion and respect, which are so clearly reflected in today's celebrations.

Let us continue striving to achieve a society in which solidarity, peace, and prosperity are the benchmark of our success, for the benefit of all the communities who call the Maltese Islands their home.

In the words of a popular Diwali greeting;

“May the festival of lights be a bringer of joy and prosperity. May it fill the atmosphere with beauty and contentment, filling us with bright sparks of love, that stay with us for all the year ahead.”

I augur that this Diwali celebration will bring us all new opportunities to nurture friendship and prosperity, for many years to come.