

Speech delivered by H.E. Marie-Louise Coleiro Preca, President of Malta, at the Junior Achievement Young Enterprise Awards 2018, 6 December 2018

**Distinguished guests,
Dear friends,
Most especially, dear students.**

I would like to commend JAYE Malta, and the sponsors of this event, on the occasion of the 30th Anniversary since the organisation was set-up in the Maltese Islands.

Over the past three decades, JAYE has provided important access to initiatives, for entrepreneurship education of young people.

I must also take this opportunity to welcome the Board Chairs, CEOs, and delegations of the various member organisations who are joining us in Malta, from all over Europe.

Your presence is a reflection of the team spirit, which exists among alumni and members.

This team spirit continues to make JAYE such a unique international contributor, to achieve entrepreneurship education in Europe.

I believe that the future of our societies, and the economic prosperity of our world, depends upon the full participation of our young people.

In order for young people to have the necessary skills and training, to be active and informed participants in our national and global economy, they must be enabled to succeed.

Furthermore, listening and responding to the aspirations of our young people must be a top priority, for all of our countries.

Growing unemployment and inequalities, which are appearing around the world, are creating a sense of injustice, which is especially damaging to young people.

For this reason, I would like to see the international community doing more to effectively implement the UN Agenda 2030.

Agenda 2030 is a global social solidarity movement, that calls for new policy agendas, new economic models, and new social perspectives, which genuinely prioritise the values of equality, equity, and inclusion.

I believe that we need to do more, to promote such strategies, which facilitate these values.

From my experience, meeting so many young people in Malta and beyond, young people give me hope that the necessary transformation of our societies can be successfully achieved.

However, we need to create inclusive spaces, where young people and decision makers can connect, with the hope that it will be the young people, themselves, who transform their concerns into practical suggestions for improving policy.

I believe that our young people must be respected at every step of the way.

Empowering young people to be active citizens, who participate in society and thereby improve their own lives and communities, is essential.

For this reason, I am convinced that we must do more to invest, as a country but also as a region and as one world, to inspire our young people to be the successful entrepreneurs and the inspiring leaders of tomorrow.

Ultimately, the work that we do, to make ourselves better citizens and better individuals, is also a way of building resilience, and prioritising the wellbeing of our societies, and our world.

Self-development is a reflection of social development, because, when we change ourselves, we are changing our world.

Encouraging our young people to participate in areas of social and economic innovation is, therefore, a crucial contribution to the positive development of our democracies, and our European way of life.

Young entrepreneurs, can build a legacy of innovation, which is fundamental for the resilience of our societies.

This is why the European Commission itself has recognised JAYE as a best practice in the sector, because it offers educational excellence in the area of entrepreneurship.

I augur that JAYE will continue its important work, here in Malta and across Europe, for the benefit of our young people.

I am truly proud of all the young people who are participating in this organisation, and working together to create more inclusive and more resilient societies.

Thank you for your attention.