

The Mediterranean Children's Movement – Closing Remark by HE Marie-Louise Coleiro

Preca

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It is a privilege to be amongst you, to be amongst very dear friends like Ninetta, Ljiljana, Jana and Uros and with my colleagues from The Malta Foundation for the Wellbeing of Society, but I am even more so privileged and honoured to be amongst so many inspirational young people from the Mediterranean. I would not take long for such closing remarks, but I feel I need to share my happiness and my sense of excitement to see this dream, this dream that I share with Ninetta, Yana, Ljiljana, and Uros, to see the Mediterranean, the children of the Mediterranean engage with each other.

We are such a beautiful region, and it is not just nature that makes us beautiful but what makes the Mediterranean region beautiful is YOU, the children and young people of this region. And you make it so beautiful because we are all so diverse and diversity is like a beautiful kaleidoscope, like a beautiful rainbow. But a rainbow would not be beautiful if you get one colour on one side and another colour on another side. The rainbow is beautiful when it is together and this is what we aspire for the Mediterranean, for the children of the Mediterranean, that they are together in this beautiful kaleidoscope of beautiful colours, manifesting our diversity, building relationships, coming together to build peace, to build a future, a beautiful future, because this is what you all so much deserve.

Today I can say that I feel a huge sense of pride in you young people, because you were at the forefront of this meeting, this humble meeting I would say. But yes, let's be humble because we are great when we are humble. But the sense of pride that I have in you all is that you've driven this meeting, you have contributed to this very first step that will bring the children of the Mediterranean from all corners of it, together.

So please feel also very proud that you are making history today. And yes, please do make history. We will be there to support you, to give a legacy, to leave a legacy to the other children that will come after you are adults so that generations will continue to believe in our beautiful kaleidoscope of diversity.

It was a productive meeting. I was participating in Michaelis' breakout session and from what I've heard now, from the conclusions, it was truly a productive and constructive meeting. But also, I could see that we have a very tall order in front of us, but I am sure that we are all feeling so challenged with these challenges, with these inspiring thoughts that we have shared, and I feel a sense of, from all of us, that we are reeling to go. Obviously, we will need to plan to bring about together a whole vision, a strategy and a plan of action and the way we have to go about things.

So, what I can conclude is that you children and young people, you will be the driving force of this Movement. You will be the driving force for a better Mediterranean, for even a more beautiful Mediterranean, because the children of the Mediterranean will all feel united, will want to be together, will want to provide a model of how we build peace, of how we can coexist together, how we can embrace and respect each other.

So, maybe I am putting a bit too much on your shoulders, but rest assured you will not be alone. You will be at the front, but we will be there all the time, to be your backbone so that we can support you with all our means and other networks. Being in Michaelis' working group, definitely, one very important point that was commonly expressed is the building of networks to support the Movement, to support children and young people of the Mediterranean.

Thank you so much children and young people for making me so proud of this very historical moment. You have to feel proud because you are the founders of a very important step forward for this beautiful region to make it even more beautiful, by feeling united, by feeling together and that togetherness is so very important for us.

And I must thank the task force because, to be honest, I might have been a bit pushy at the start but definitely, Ninetta has been doing such a lot of work and Ljiljana and Yana and Uros together. I mean all of us have such a lot of other work, but this is so very important for all of us and really thank you so much colleagues for being such a driving force to come to this point.

Thank you