

KAMRA TAD-DEPUTATI



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

PARLAMENT TA' MALTA

*L-Ispeaker*

*The Speaker*

**Speech by**

**Hon. Angelo Farrugia Speaker of the House of Representatives**

*Second Session of the International Parliament of the Global Council for Tolerance and  
Peace*

**16 November 2018**

**HE Mr Ilir Meta, President of Albania**

**HE Ms Senida Mesi, Vice-Prime Minister of Albania**

**HE Mr Gramoz Ruçi, Speaker of the Albanian Parliament**

**HE Mr Ahmed bin Mohammed Al-Jarwan, President of the Global Council for Tolerance and Peace**

**HE Taulant Balla, President of the International Parliament**

**Esteemed Colleagues**

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

It is a pleasure to be with you today and together continue this very important project: the promotion of tolerance and peace across the world and future generations. I wish to wholeheartedly thank the Speaker of the Albanian Parliament HE Ruçi for hosting us today and the President of the International Parliament HE Balla for organising the second session of the International Parliament for Tolerance and Peace. I am very proud to assert that the Global Council for Tolerance and Peace has chosen Malta as its headquarters and earlier this year, on 6 July, the Maltese Parliament together with the GCTP launched the International Parliament for Tolerance and Peace. The Ministerial and Parliamentary dimension greatly complement each other and continue to consolidate further the GCTP's core function of promoting a more unified and peaceful existence. I am also confident that the Council's outreach to international organization, such as the recent meeting between President Al-Jarwan and UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Ms Michele Bachelet, continue to elevate the GCTP status and strengthen its position in the world.

**Colleagues,**

As we gather here for the second session of the IPTP, I am pleased to see many participants that were already with us in Malta. The International Parliament can now enjoy the membership of over 30 countries stretching from the North to the South and from the West to the East. Diversity, individuality and a large pool of perspectives are the characteristics that make us strong against the adversities of our shared human existence. In my speech delivered during the opening session, I spoke about peace as a continuous process - one, which is not limited to a particular geographical region or point in history but is rather a universal journey requiring joint and innovative tools. I highlighted the importance to transform words into action and be open to different beliefs and creeds. Furthermore, I emphasized the importance to recognize that tolerance and peace are not abstract unattainable concepts applicable only to certain countries or political realities, but are universal notions that should form the basis of our every policy and legal script. Moreover, I emphasized that tolerance and peace necessitate a reciprocal approach and the whole-hearted participation by everyone. From the youngest members of our societies to our elderly population, from the remote farmer working the land to the urban business CEO, we all hold the potential to be Ambassadors for Tolerance and Peace.

**Esteemed colleagues,**

As elected representatives of our respective communities, we enact legislation and are in direct contact with our constituency. We are instrumental to promote and foster fundamental values of non-violence, respect of and openness to others, tolerance, solidarity and peace. Through our parliamentary work we need to reaffirm the importance of mutual understanding and dialogue as the basis for any functional society and inter-personal relationship. By mutual understanding I do not mean the homogenization of society. On the contrary, through dialogue we create a vibrant hub to exchange different traditions and beliefs. Subsequently, they reinforce each other to create long lasting peaceful coexistence. As members of Parliament, we also have an important role to use parliamentary diplomacy as a catalyst for the propagation of tolerance and peace. Opportunities created by similar inter-parliamentary fora strengthen dialogue and provide us with the possibility to contemplate and act where elements of intolerance and hate seep into our discourse and communities.

Regarding Kosovo, I am pleased to assert that back in 2010 Malta actively worked in the European Parliament to push forward for the recognition of the country at a European level and my country was one of the first European countries to recognize the sovereignty of the Republic of Kosovo. I join your message, Speaker Ruçi to urge the remaining EU Member States to do the same. Malta remains committed to act as a bridge between the North and the South of Europe. Already in 1975 at the meeting held in Helsinki by the then Conference for Security and Cooperation in Europe, Malta advocated for an inclusive political dialogue thus promoting the participation of Southern Mediterranean states. In the years that followed, Malta continued to be a beacon of neutrality and facilitated the organization of numerous meetings and events aimed at promoting dialogue and peace. Only recently, the Office of the President of Malta organised a cross-cutting exhibition entitled *The Majlis: Cultures in Dialogue*. The Majlis, is the space of hospitality and dialogue present in homes throughout the Arabian Gulf, offering guests the opportunity to exchange ideas about how much common ground exists between different cultures, and how these commonalities have been expressed in technology, art and culture. The exhibition aimed to encourage visitors to respond to what they see and to share their own stories, creating dialogue between East and West, between young and old, between the past and the future.

### **Colleagues,**

As we yearly celebrate the UN Day of Tolerance on 16 November, that is today let us today once more embrace this opportunity for dialogue and maintain an optimistic outlook of our shared and common future. We are all part of this project and together we can make a tangible and long-lasting impact. On this note and to conclude, I wish to share with you a very brief but fascinating quote by the late Mother Therese, a loved saint of this country and an Albanian national, when she stated;

*‘‘If we have no peace, it is because we have forgotten that we belong to each other’’*

Thank you