

**Speech by H.E. President George Vella**

**Link School of English and Associazione Multiculturale Mondiale (AMCM)**

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Chev. Roger de Gaetano

Prof. Letterio Campolo

Dear guests

- I am pleased to host you all at Sant' Anton for this event and to address you briefly on the importance of the English language studies for Malta.
- I commend Link School for taking this initiative and welcome the Associazione Multiculturale Mondiale for their participation.
- As you all know, the sector of English Language studies has become one of the major contributors to the tourism industry - with young students and professionals alike choosing Malta for improving their knowledge of the English language.
- This field is one where we successfully transformed our historical ties to the United Kingdom into a present-day economic asset. English is one of the two official languages spoken in Malta and this fact, together with an excellent climate and welcoming society, make Malta an ideal place for studying English as a foreign language.
- Schools in Malta have a pool of experienced teachers to cater for all ages and all levels of English. There are, in fact, over 40 language schools in Malta and Gozo, offering a range of courses and leisure-time activities.
- It is also to be noted that a number of these schools, including Link, are members of FELTOM - the Federation of English Language Teaching Organisations in Malta, which was founded by ten English language schools way back in 1989. The industry was then still in its inception and the decision to intensify investment in this sector was a very beneficial one for the country's economic, tourist sector and Malta's name

abroad. I have just been to Tokyo, and was amazed at the number of Japanese nationals who turned up for a Malta-japan meeting, and who had been to Malta to study English.

- The work carried out by FELTOM is fundamental as it is dedicated to promoting professionalism by setting and maintaining standards in every aspect of a language stay.
- Standards are crucial and I therefore applaud the work that FELTOM has carried out in the development of codes of conduct and national standards of service for its members.
- Very importantly, as a parent – no doubt worried about sending an unaccompanied youngster abroad, probably for the first time- choosing Malta as a destination removes all concerns regarding safety and the well-being of their children.
- Our ultimate strength lies in the fact that Malta offers a safe and pleasant environment. in most occasions activities are organised and supervised.
- Apart from life in the classroom, a large share of Malta's success as a destination is the opportunity to actually practise English in running errands, going around the islands and getting to know the Maltese people. Publications in the English language are readily available, and several TV and radio channels broadcast in English. This provides our visitors with the unique experience of participating in the daily lives of us Maltese, and very often taking back home very candid memories and life-long friendships.
- The study of a foreign language, in a different country is an experience our youth should be able to do at least once in their lifetime. this is not only an academic 'plus' but a life-enriching landmark that determines a young adult's journey in life.
- In EU countries we have the 'erasmus +' project which gives our students the opportunity to study in other countries for six months. ideally, we should also be thinking of giving such an opportunity to students and young people from countries outside the eu. this way we would be investing in youth.

- Finally, I wish to extend my appreciation to link school for its thoughtfulness and the decision it has taken to support the Malta Community Chest Fund Foundation. I assure you that the support you are kindly offering is continuously required to address the needs of several of those who need it. i assure you the numbers, unfortunately, are not small. besides, rest assured it will be put to the best possible use.

Thank you.