

Message by H.E.George Vella, President of Malta on the National Day of Ireland and Feast of St Patrick, March 17, 2021

On the occasion of the National Day of Ireland, I wish to convey my sincere greetings to H.E. Ambassador Patrick Duffy, all his team at the Embassy and the Irish community working and living in Malta and to welcome this opportunity to address you via this short message.

The ongoing challenges posed by the Covid Pandemic created an unprecedented health emergency and continue to wreak havoc in our communities, especially amongst the older generations and vulnerable people.

I therefore take the opportunity to share my solidarity with the people of Ireland during these testing times and express my sorrow for the families of the victims that lost their battle against this silent killer.

As a global community we look optimistically to the coming months and enhanced scientific research to ensure this collective nightmare comes to an end, and a long-term and accessible solution is found for all.

Built on the mutual belief of dialogue amongst nations and the promotion of international tolerance and peace, both Malta and Ireland endeavour to be key players in regional politics and have on multiple occasions collaborated in international fora on issues linked with sustainability, security and peace.

I wish to thank the Irish Embassy in Malta and the Embassy of Malta in Ireland for their commitment to act as bridge facilitating cultural interaction between our respective peoples and further strengthening political dialogue and commercial opportunities.

The relationship between Malta and Ireland goes beyond purely diplomatic and commercial interests. It is a convergence of values, made even stronger by the increased people-to-people contacts over the years

As island states and democracies driven by a mission for international dialogue, we have the potential to be a leader in proposing innovative solutions addressing global and pressing challenges such as: climate change, terrorism, the proliferation of arms, and human trafficking.

I welcome Ireland's successful election as a non-permanent member to the UN Security Council.

The Republic of Malta looks forward to collaborating further with Ireland to promote sustainable development, narrowing the North-South socio-economic divide, promoting harmonious, healthy and prosperous communities, and ultimately working towards a rekindled global consciousness revolving around empathy, dialogue and peace.

The Feast of Saint Patrick and the 17th of March are traditionally connected to the green colour and the three leafed shamrock. The world joins in the Irish festivities and various buildings and streets, including in Malta, are usually lit up in green for the occasion.

In a way, the whole global community becomes part of the extended warmth of the Irish family.

I believe, the representation of the three leaves in the Irish Shamrock could be linked to the role of Ireland in the year 2021 and beyond.

- The first leaf represents Ireland's lush and rich ecological landscapes and Ireland's contribution to combat climate change and promote a greener and a more sustainable future.
- The second leaf represents Ireland's strong role of promoting dialogue amongst nation states and the newly found role in the UN Security Council.
- The third leaf represents Ireland's perseverance and endurance in the face of turbulent and challenging times, without forsaking a warm and joyous outlook on life.

I take this opportunity to convey my warmest salutations to H.E. President Michael Higgins, an indefatigable academician and politician, and on behalf of the people of Malta I wish to you and your families a serene and healthy St Patrick's Day.