



Press Release

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PRESS RELEASE BY THE OFFICE OF THE SPEAKER

Speaker of the House of Representatives addresses the members of the XV International Convention Lions Club

Speaker of the House of Representatives Anglu Farrugia delivered the opening speech at the XV International Convention Lions Club, Walled Cities.

In his address, Speaker Farrugia said that Malta being an archipelago of small islands in the middle of the Mediterranean finds itself in one of the most important geo-strategic position throughout history, is adorned with a large concentration of fortified walls that surround our cities and towns. Remains of fortified walls that go back to the Bronze Age and are still present to this day as much as the Medieval walls that form part of Mdina fortifications and parts of Cittadella in Gozo. The Knights of St John transformed large parts of the harbour area into fortified cities and towns, whilst numerous coastal towers had been built to assure that the islands are carefully protected.

He continued by saying that heritage clearly explains that during large periods of its development, Malta was practically a fortress colony. Defence and security were always an issue that had to be dealt by the Maltese and their colonisers. Although today, one admires the beauty of this impressive architecture and defence mechanisms, it also reminds all that the Maltese citizens had to struggle against any possible invasion practically throughout its entire history. That maybe also explains why after achieving Independence in 1964, Malta's vocation in the Mediterranean changed from a fortress colony into a country promoting peace and dialogue in the region.

In his speech, reference was done to the capital city of Malta, Valletta, which is a UNESCO World heritage site. Built after the Great Siege of 1565 and named after Grandmaster Jean Parisot de la Valette, this fortified city has hundreds of monuments, all within a relatively small space, making it one of the most concentrated historic areas in the world. Being the nerve centre of the Maltese political, administrative and business sphere as well as a major tourist attraction, it still is a challenge to conserve and restore its infrastructure and its fortifications.

Speaker Anglu Farrugia also referred to the latest facelift of the entrance of Valletta and the building of a new Parliament, which gave a new dimension to the city. The new entrance Valletta project was entrusted to the renowned architect Renzo Piano, whose design, though contemporary, attention was given by Mr Piano in blending smoothly this project with the rest of the fortifications. The building itself, a structure of steel clattered with Gozitan natural stone, leaves space for better visibility of Saint James Cavalier. By dividing the structure into two blocks, Architect Renzo Piano intentionally left adequate openings for people to appreciate the beauty of our fortifications. The use of transparent glass at street level gives the opportunity to visitors to see and better appreciate the beauty of our fortifications in this part of Valletta.

Attachments: photos

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