



Agreed Minutes
11th Session of the Malta-Tunisia Joint Commission

Joint Statement
Valletta — 4-5 February 2019

Following the positive outcome of the tenth session of the Malta-Tunisia Joint Commission, which took place in Tunis from 3 to 5 September 2012, the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade Promotion of the Republic of Malta, the Hon. Carmelo Abela, and the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Tunisia, H.E. Khemaies Jhinaoui, have convened the eleventh session of the Malta-Tunisia Joint Commission.

The two Ministers reiterated their determination to enhance the excellent bilateral relations for the benefit of the two peoples in line with the spirit of the Treaty of Friendship, Good Neighbourhood and Cooperation, which was signed in Valletta in June 2005.

The two Ministers highlighted their shared values of freedom and democracy, which have continued to bolster this relationship. In highlighting the regular exchanges between both sides including through the visit to Tunisia by H.E. The President of Malta from 7 to 8 November 2017, the State Visit to Malta by H.E. The President of Tunisia from 5 to 6 February 2019, and the upcoming political consultations between the Hon. Carmelo Abela and H.E. Khemaies Jhinaoui on 6 February 2019, both Ministers stated that these exchanges serve as an attestation to the strong relationship and levels of trust between both countries at bilateral and regional level.

The support between the two countries, including in relation to the adoption of the EU-Tunisia Strategic Priorities for 2018-2020 and the cooperation pursued through regional fora such as the 5+5 Western Mediterranean Dialogue, were also elaborated on to highlight the level of regional cooperation. In this context, the Ministers welcomed the Valletta Declaration adopted at the 5+5 Foreign Ministers Meeting held in Malta on 18 January 2019.

The two Ministers, on the occasion of this Joint Commission, examined more deeply the existing opportunities for enhanced cooperation in a number of sectors including those related to trade and economy, culture, tourism, town twinning, transport, vocational training and employment, higher education, research and innovation, health, agriculture and fisheries, as well as gender, early childhood and seniors, with the aim to identify and formalise initiatives for the period to come.

During the eleventh session of the Joint Commission, the following was agreed to:

1. Trade and Economy

The two parties have examined their business relations with the aim to further promote them, expressing their satisfaction for the increase of business exchanges in the last years. In this context, both sides are satisfied with the fruitful cooperation between the Tunisian Export Promotion Agency and Malta Enterprise.

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The Ministry for Economy, Investment and Small Businesses of the Republic of Malta and the Ministry of Trade of the Republic of Tunisia expressed in this regard their interest to intensify economic and trade relations.

Both Parties reiterated that the opportunities offered by the markets in Malta and Tunisia should be explored further to bolster mutual relations. Emphasis was thereby placed on the need to diversify trade products including goods and services. The two sides agree upon the following actions:

- Diversifying and promoting the exchanged products from the two countries on mutual basis by looking for added value products;
- Enhancing cooperation between the private sectors and supporting institutions;
- Identifying common programs by reinforcing tripartite cooperation between the two countries by strengthening the position of Malta as a portal to European countries and the position of Tunisia as a portal to Arab Maghreb and African countries; and
- Discussing the potential of developing cooperation between the two countries through benefiting from European Union support mechanism and its exploitation for the implementation of joint projects.

It was also agreed that exchange of good practices should also take place as a means to develop and promote Small and Medium Enterprises while enhancing their competitiveness.

The current negotiations between the EU and Tunisia concerning the Deep Comprehensive and Free Trade Agreement (DCFTA) were also mentioned in this respect. In this regard, Malta and Tunisia agreed to intensify exchanges between the two countries with a view to discuss opportunities that a future DCFTA could bring with the objective of supporting optimal deliverables of mutual interest in these negotiations.

The Tunisian side has expressed its will to benefit from Maltese experience in the field of transposition of *Acquis Communautaire* in the different sectors related to trade.

2. Culture

The Directorate of Culture within the Ministry for Justice, Culture and Local Government of the Republic of Malta and the Ministry of Cultural Affairs of the Republic of Tunisia discussed ways to strengthen bilateral relations through culture.

The two Parties expressed their interest to engage in exchanges related to artistic practices especially those in relation to choreography and contemporary dance, the visual arts and music and heritage, and noted that these exchanges could be carried out via residence workshops. The two Parties agreed to develop the concept of these exchanges further as this would enable their peoples to learn about and experience diverse cultures and its different facets.

The Ministry for Justice, Culture and Local Government of the Republic of Malta and the Ministry of Cultural Affairs of the Republic of Tunisia also commended the renewal of cultural cooperation through the adoption of the Cultural Cooperation Programme for 2019-2021.

3. Tourism

The Malta side expressed interest to collaborate with the Tunisian side in the training of students in the tourism and hospitality studies through the Institute of Tourism Studies (ITS) in the Republic of Malta, in order to increase value and quality of human resources.

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4. Town Twinning

The Ministry for Justice, Culture and Local Government of the Republic of Malta and the Ministry of Local Affairs and Environment of the Republic of Tunisia reiterated their interest in exploring town twinning opportunities between both sides.

5. Transport

In the field of Land Transport

The two Parties recalled the proposed Agreement on International Transport of Passengers and Goods by Road and Transit, and agreed to step-up their exchanges with the objective of pursuing negotiations at the proper level at the earliest possible.

In the field of Maritime transport and seaports

Both Parties recalled the proposal to conclude an agreement on Maritime Transport and agreed to commence negotiations at the earliest possible.

The two sides agreed to start implementing the Memorandum of Understanding between the *Office de la Marine Marchande et des Ports* (OMMP) and Transport Malta signed on 2012.

The two Parties agreed to explore areas of cooperation between their respective maritime administrations, commercial seaports and training institutes in the field of safety, security, marine environmental protection and the International Convention on Standards of Training, Certification and Watch keeping for Seafarers (STCW).

6. Vocational training and employment

The Two Parties commended the signing of the agreement between the two Governments on Temporary Employment of Nationals of the Republic of Tunisia in the Republic of Malta and the Nationals of the Republic of Malta in the Republic of Tunisia.

Jobsplus for the Republic of Malta and the National Agency for Employment and Self-Employment (ANETI) of the Republic of Tunisia agreed to explore further the proposal by the Tunisian side for a 'Partnership Agreement in the Field of Employment between the ANETI - Tunisia and Jobsplus for the Republic of Malta' and to assess their mutual contributions to this project while ensuring the exchange of good practices to this end.

The Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology (MCAST) of the Republic of Malta reiterated its willingness to assist the Sectoral Centre for Training on Jewelry and Watchmaking in Gammarth and the Training Institution for Art Crafts in Nabeul in developing vocational competences and training courses through consultations with the local industry.

The two projects proposed by the Tunisian side were agreed to. These consist of the support of vocational training of young people in art crafts, together with the enhancement of knowledge from Maltese craftsmen and experts to Tunisian youth to design and manufacture jewellery and artistic products notably through the use of multiple techniques.

7. Higher Education, Research and Innovation

The Tunisian and Maltese sides agreed to cooperate within the framework of the existing agreements on Cooperation in Higher Education and Scientific Research between the two governments in order to expand opportunities for educational exchanges, scientific research and innovation partnerships at the bilateral, EU and multilateral levels.

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Both sides agreed to continue collaborating on student, scholar, and teacher exchanges, promote language acquisition, and share best practices between the two countries, as well as the ability to launch mobility programmes for the profit of young researchers, postdocs and graduate students.

In the field of Research and Innovation, the two Parties also agreed to promote and encourage joint research projects between higher education and research institutions, science and technology parks, and to promote joint collaboration in multilateral programmes *inter alia* H2020 and PRIMA.

8. Health

The Ministry for Health of the Republic of Malta and the Ministry of Health for the Republic of Tunisia reiterated their intention to pursue Article 2 of the Agreement on Cooperation in the field of Medical Services and Public Health, which was signed on 4 July 2006. Such cooperation should be pursued through an exchange of best practices and cooperation in international programmes related to health, an exchange of information to gain a deeper understanding of the respective health systems and the fostering of relations between hospitals and institutes of research and medical training as well as seeking to develop collaborations to counteract international public health threats.

Both Parties expressed their willingness to further develop their mutual relations further based on Article 2 of the above-mentioned Agreement.

9. Agriculture and Fisheries

The Ministry for Sustainable Development, the Environment and Climate Change along with the University of Malta expressed an interest to pursue the implementation of specific articles outlined within the Cooperation Framework on Agricultural Research and Education, which was signed between Malta and Tunisia on 24 June 2010. Both entities reiterated the need to encourage the exchange of scientific information and experience in the fields of research and teaching as well as the realisation of joint research projects and the creation of jointly directed degrees.

The Maltese and Tunisian sides undertook to explore the following areas of cooperation for the benefit of students, scientific and agricultural communities of both countries:

- Agricultural research, particularly in the field of biotechnology, through research and development projects, the exchange of visits by researchers, the exchange of expertise, the organization of training sessions on topics of common interest;
- Organic agriculture, quality products, soil fertility, plant nutrition, plant protection, irrigation, livestock production, the exchange of expertise, animals and plant seeds according to the regulations in force in each of the two countries;
- Optimisation of human, technical and natural potential for the aquaculture sector (in particular for the breeding of yellow fin tuna, blue fin tuna farming, etc);
- The promotion and sustainable development of small-scale fishing in Tunisia through the implementation of integrated policies at national and regional level, which highlight the socio-economic dimensions of small-scale fishing;
- Assistance in the implementation of the recommendations and commitments in relation to the Malta Declaration "MedFish4Ever"; in particular in safeguarding the fishery resources on the Mediterranean. A detailed work program for the next ten years, based on ambitious but realistic objectives, has been put in place and bilateral cooperation between Malta and Tunisia will contribute significantly to achieve the objective set out in the Medfish4ever Declaration.

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The two sides agreed to convene a meeting of the Joint Technical Committee in the agricultural and fisheries sectors in the second half of 2019 to prepare a joint action plan to boost and strengthen bilateral cooperation in the agricultural and fisheries sector.

10. Gender, Early childhood and seniors

The Tunisian side recalled its participation to the High-Level Global Conference on the Universal Prohibition of Corporal Punishment on 31 May and 1 June 2018 in Malta, during which Tunisia was chosen to host in 2020, its fourth edition. The Tunisian side invited the Maltese side to contribute actively in the preparation of this Conference.

The two Parties commended the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding responding to the Development of Early Childhood and the Protocol of Cooperation in the area of Seniors.

Both Parties agreed to further explore the possibilities of mutual cooperation in the field of gender equality and gender-based violence, as well as in the area of women's economic and political empowerment.

Conclusion

The two Parties expressed their satisfaction, following the frank and friendly discussions that took place during the eleventh session of the Malta-Tunisia Joint Commission. Both Parties agreed that such high-level cooperation reaffirms the depth of the longstanding and historic relations between the two countries, which can only grow stronger.

Signed in Valletta on 5 February 2019, in the English language only.



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Trade Promotion of the
Republic of Malta



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Minister of Foreign Affairs of
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