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## **MINISTER FOR COMPETITIVENESS AND COMMUNICATIONS OF MALTA DELIVERS WELCOME ADDRESS DURING THE INAUGURATION OF THE 12<sup>TH</sup> EC MARITIME LAW COURSE**

The Honorable Censu Galea, Minister for Competitiveness and Communications of Malta delivered the welcome address during the inauguration of the 12<sup>th</sup> EC Maritime Law Course.



*The Honorable Censu Galea delivering the welcome address  
during the inauguration of the 12<sup>th</sup> EC Maritime Law Course*

This is the text of his speech.

**The Hon. Censu Galea – Minister for Competitiveness and Communications  
'The Future Challenges of Co-ordinating a European Maritime Policy'**

Good Morning,

It's a pleasure for me to be here at the introduction of such an important lecture.

In the interdependent world we live in it is essential that we adopt a coordinated approach to maritime affairs. The creation of a new maritime policy for Europe – an initiative that is being led by EU Commissioner Dr. Joe Borg, in partnership with all maritime stakeholders – will ensure that Europe is able to maximize the advantages its maritime sector offers by becoming ever more competitive.

For us in Malta an effective maritime policy is crucial if we are to continue to build upon the historical successes that our maritime economy has achieved. It is almost forty years ago that Malta first advocated a holistic approach to the governance of the world's oceans – its Permanent Representative to the UN drew the attention of the General Assembly to the need for a new comprehensive regime governing humankind's activities on the oceans. This initiative, which culminated in the 1982 UN Convention on the Law of the Sea, was based on the fundamental premise that all the problems of the oceans are closely inter-related and need to be considered as a whole.

Four decades later the need for a holistic maritime policy is more evident than ever. Several maritime security challenges are ecological, economic and political in nature. Oil exploration, the protection of fish stocks, marine environmental protection, or the management of coastal areas or shipping are influencing decision making at all levels of governance, from the EU to the national, regional and local levels.

In the 21<sup>st</sup> century advanced and innovative technologies are also creating new maritime economic opportunities that however need to be balanced by credible sustainable development mechanisms. My Government is implementing the Lisbon Strategy in a manner appropriate for a maritime state, that is, by ensuring that such a strategy results in Malta's economy becoming even more competitive, green, and knowledge-based in future.

A European maritime policy will also create a more conducive environment within which the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership goals of creating a Euro-Mediterranean area of peace and prosperity can be achieved. The Five-Year work programme adopted by the Euro-Mediterranean countries at the tenth anniversary summit in Barcelona in November 2005 calls for the promotion of an environmental sustainable development policy and the launching of a road map for de-polluting the Mediterranean by 2020. Malta has proposed that the EU should consider giving special development aid in those cases where non-EU neighbours would like to cooperate but are hindered by the cost of participating in certain initiatives.

The Euro-Mediterranean Partnership also calls for a more regular exchange of experiences on sustainable development in the Baltic Sea, the Mediterranean and the Black Sea. A holistic European maritime policy will provide the perfect impetus to realise such objectives.

For more than a year now the Ministry for Competitiveness and Communications has been working together with other ministries and authorities with an interest in maritime affairs to map out future strategies of management in this sector to ensure that future generations can also benefit from the sea. A new maritime policy for Europe will open a new chapter of the EU's history and signal an innovative important institutional response to the special challenges posed by the governance of the sea. Malta looks forward to contributing in an ongoing and proactive manner to this challenging process that will influence directly future Euro-Mediterranean relations.

Maritime initiatives require international cooperation – with fellow Member States of the European Union and with third countries – in order to be truly effective. For this reason on the 18<sup>th</sup> May, as a necessary extension of the national project of coordination and consolidation, Malta will be organising an international conference on marine spatial planning in the Euro-Med region.

Thank You.

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