



United Nations Human Rights Council
Universal Periodic Review

Geneva, September 23, 2009

Adoption of the report of the Universal Periodic Review of
Malta

H.E. Ambassador Victor Camilleri

Permanent Representative of Malta to the United Nations

I am pleased to present the response to the recommendations made to Malta during its Universal Periodic Review in May of this year. A final corrected version of our responses is on the HRC extranet.

My authorities feel that Malta's UPR exercise was a very challenging and rewarding experience. We have been able to confirm at first hand the relevance and value of this recently introduced process in the work of the Human Rights Council. We fully agree that the UPR offers a genuine opportunity for states to take a serious and intensive look at their own human rights process, in a spirit of mutual understanding and cooperation.

We are particularly gratified at the way in which our UPR exercise has permitted us to express and explain our abiding commitment to the promotion and protection of human rights at both the national as well as the international levels. I wish to again confirm and reiterate this commitment at our meeting here today.

We realise that the UPR process is still in its early stages and will be further developed and refined in the light of experience gained. We also recognise that this first cycle of the exercise is an important first step that needs to be followed up by continuing work and application in the coming months and years, and to be further developed in future cycles. Malta continues to be ready to engage in this process to the greatest extent of its ability.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all those who helped make our UPR exercise such a rewarding experience. In the first place I thank those states and members of civil society who presented us with comments, questions and recommendations which prompted us to further develop and explain our thinking, actions and policies.

The three members of our troika, Saudi Arabia, Egypt and Ukraine, made a very useful contribution to the smooth unfolding of the exercise. I wish to express the appreciation of the Maltese delegation for their efforts. I also wish to thank the members of the secretariat who worked with us in the finalisation of the relevant documents and reports, including the latest one containing our responses to the recommendations.

As our detailed response to the recommendations is contained in the written document I will here only make a brief overview of these responses.

The various comments and suggestions made have been clustered in 47 recommendations, most of which Malta can accept either in full or in part. A number of these recommendations in fact urge us to continue and reinforce current practices and legislation regarding the protection and promotion of various aspects of Human Rights in Malta. We have taken note of these recommendations.

Other recommendations include suggestions regarding measures which are either already in place in Malta or which we are in the process of implementing. In these cases we have explained the legislation and practice already applied in Malta and indicated the measures that we are continuing to undertake.

With regard to various suggestions regarding international treaties and obligations we have indicated that we will be ratifying the Optional protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child and withdrawing the declaration we made when signing this protocol. We also plan to ratify the Disabilities Convention.

At the same time we state that Malta does not intend to accede to the Convention on the Protection of the Rights of Migrant Workers, or to ratify the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women and the Convention for the Protection of all persons from Enforced Disappearances.

Malta will retain its original reservations on articles 11 and 16 of the CEDAW. Malta reiterates that the right to life is an inherent right of every human being including the unborn child from its conception. We will retain our existing national legislation on the question of abortion. Equally we believe that whether or not to legislate to recognise the relationship between two partners, irrespective of their sex, remains a matter of national competence.

A number of comments and recommendations were directed at the issue of irregular migration and Malta's policies and practices on this aspect. We are appreciative of the fact that many delegations recognised the unique difficulties faced by Malta in meeting the challenges arising from what is for us an unmanageable influx of illegal migrants. In our responses we explain that the basis of all our actions remains a full commitment to resolve the issues that arise on the basis of the fullest respect of the rights and dignity of all individuals concerned. We also reiterate our commitment to respect all our international obligations in this regard.