



## **Koperazzjoni Internazzjonali (Malta)**

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### **Welcome by Vince Caruana International Officer Maltese NGDO Platform**

Malta has moved forward from an ex-colony, to an independent republic often striving to get to grips with a post colonial reality, to a new member state within the EU. Malta has moved forward from a country where “big brother” has to provide for everything to a people seeking an identity in the face of globalising forces.

Within this background, Civil Society in Malta is an emerging phenomenon. One recent important development has been the establishment of the Maltese NGDO Platform where for the first time NGOs have decided to cooperate together while affirming their own identity and autonomy. The Maltese NGDO Platform has been a founding member of CONCORD - the European NGOs Confederation for Relief and Development.

As NGDOs we are tired of tired politicians promoting peace plans which they are not committed to. As NGDOs we are tired of being actually able to anticipate most of the news of the day. As NGDOs we are astounded by the 1000 billion dollars every year that goes towards military activity compared with the mere 50 billion dollars that goes towards development cooperation. As NGDOs we are disappointed at the slow progress towards the Millennium Development goals. As NGDOs we are angry at the corporate and government control of various media – we are interested much more in getting to understand the realities as experienced by communities, by women, and by children.

As civil society within a new member state in the EU, within the only EU country with a Semitic language, within a neutral country, we feel we should be doing more than we have done until now to further peace and reconciliation in the Mediterranean region. We believe in a pro-active bottom up approach where peace is not talked about but lived through concrete actions on the ground. We believe in dialogue and non violence as a methodology to attain our aims, while striving to understand the cry behind the violence. We believe that the various positive experiences of conviviality being experimented need more visibility and need to serve as a positive inspiration for others. We believe that there are various forces that seek to dehumanise the other to make it thus possible for us to harm the other. We reject this and we try to acquaint ourselves with the other and see the human face behind the anonymity promoted by those with vested interests.

It is thus our pleasure as a Maltese NGDO Platform to have representatives from most Mediterranean countries gathered together to further dialogue and to launch a network dedicated to furthering peace and sustainable livelihoods in the region. We assure you that this is not a one time commitment on our part but an opening to a long winding road with no fixed destination but with committed and like minded travellers. We thank the EC for its support in this initiative.

Vince Caruana