

**Speech by Prime Minister Robert Abela during exchanges of New Year Greetings with members of the Diplomatic Corps**

Honourable Ministers,  
Principal Permanent Secretary,  
Cabinet Secretary,  
Excellencies,

I welcome you all at this annual appointment, which brings us together to reflect on the past year and greet a new one ahead of us.

I value our gathering as a unique opportunity to share Malta's perspective on global as well as national matters.

In 2025, Malta continued to diligently build on its pursuit of peace and international dialogue, against a most problematic backdrop.

A cross-cutting parameter that guided our work was the need to contribute towards the preservation of a rules-based world order.

For all countries, particularly small, open economies like Malta, this framework is essential to ensure stability, predictability and fairness in international relations.

All our initiatives were directed at reviving an order that is founded on the full respect for international law, multilateral cooperation and agreed norms.

Malta has closely followed the latest developments in Venezuela. The outcome must be a peaceful, negotiated, and democratic solution.

This immediately brings me to Russia's war of aggression in Ukraine.

Our position remains a consistent one on the ongoing diplomatic process. Unity is of the essence.

Together with other international partners, we need to remain steadfast in pursuing a just and lasting peace in Ukraine.

Malta remained firmly committed to support Ukraine in close coordination with our European partners, while fully respecting our constitutional neutrality. At the last European Council, we reaffirmed the importance of upholding EU and international law, ensuring that all measures adopted are legally sound, sustainable, and reinforce the credibility of the EU's collective support for Ukraine.

Excellencies,

In the months ahead, the situation in the Middle East will remain a focal point on Malta's foreign policy agenda.

The humanitarian situation in Gaza remains critical, and there are growing concerns regarding the status of Palestinians living in the West Bank. This is why I announced Malta's official recognition of the State of Palestine in September 2025. This step, while fundamental, is only one of many others that are needed.

All members of the international community must support the urgency of establishing a political horizon for the Palestinian people.

We must all believe that violence and death will only lead to more hatred and will make it impossible to take steps towards mutual understanding.

Within the European Union, Malta has remained a voice for just peace and dialogue.

We have contributed constructively and tangibly to the Union's consolidation of peace and humanitarian efforts.

In doing so, we have not lost sight of our Constitutional obligations and safeguarded our longstanding sovereign parameters.

For the months ahead, we hope to see a stronger and more effective European Union, which ensures its own competitiveness and that of its Member States.

The past year has continued to shine a light on Malta's established credentials in multilateral diplomacy.

We continued our active contribution within the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe as members of the OSCE Troika, chairing the Asian Partnership for Cooperation.

We concluded our Presidency of the Council of Europe which also coincided with the 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Malta's membership of the Council. Among the defining moments of our tenure was the historic signing of the agreement establishing the Special Tribunal for the Crime of Aggression against Ukraine, as well as the approval by consensus of the Draft Convention establishing an International Claims Commission for Ukraine. In Malta, we also opened the Valletta Protocol signed by 16 member states; and secured the unanimous adoption of three political declarations guiding Europe's work on children's rights, youth empowerment, and judicial cooperation.

Together, we have demonstrated that multilateralism remains vital and that no nation is too small to inspire change.

This is thanks to the work carried out by the officials working within Malta's foreign service.

Together, we have built a legacy.

Excellencies,

External and national factors that impinge on stability and growth cannot be addressed in isolation.

These challenges cut horizontally across numerous portfolios and cannot be addressed through fragmented or siloed approaches.

Climate change, digitalisation and artificial intelligence, emerging economic niches, and the imperative of continuous skilling, reskilling and upskilling are clear examples that require coordinated national responses.

It is precisely in this spirit that Government prepared Malta Vision 2050, which will be officially launched in the coming weeks.

The title we gave to the Vision, is in itself very rich in meaning.

*"A Safe and Resilient Nation, inspired by Heritage, and driven by Progress, fostering a healthy quality of life, for all."*

*Safe and Resilient* reflects stability, security, and the capacity to adapt and recover from shocks.

*Inspired by Heritage* recognises Malta's history, identity and values as anchors of continuity in a rapidly changing world.

*Driven by Progress* signals openness to innovation, technology and reform as engines of sustainable development.

*Fostering a healthy quality of life, for all* places people, wellbeing and inclusivity at the very centre of national development, ensuring that progress benefits every segment of society.

As societies evolve, so do people's aspirations and expectations.

This understanding explains the deliberate shift towards international benchmarks that go beyond Gross Domestic Product.

What is even more important is that the Vision is grounded in dialogue.

It was shaped through extensive public consultations and structured engagement with stakeholders across society and the economy, representing one of the most extensive nationwide exercises ever carried out in Malta.

I am also pleased to inform you of ongoing plans to hold key events in a number of your capitals.

I am sure we will be able to count on your support in this regard.

Even here, I speak of a 'legacy'.

A unique and ambitious journey, which we encourage you to follow very closely.

I conclude by thanking you, Excellencies, for the collaboration and friendship that your countries continue to extend to Malta and ask you to convey these sentiments to your respective Governments.

A final word of appreciation goes to those of you who have travelled purposely to participate in these Greetings, while reiterating the pleasure of hosting so many of you residing in Malta.

I wish you all, a most rewarding and successful New Year.

Thank you.