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May 2013 FRANK L SCICLUNA - HON  
CONSUL



### Maltese Migration and the Migration Museum

05MAY2012

by Prof. Maurice Cauchi

*An artist impression of the central digital information podium in the main hall of the Migration Museum in Valletta*

The story of migration has been written by people like Fr Lawrence Attard, who in a series of books have highlighted this story starting from over a century ago and including the more recent events. We, as persons who actually made that history, should be interested in these aspects. We should also be worried about the fact that after we depart, there is a good possibility that all this will be forgotten.

At the second Convention for Maltese living abroad held in 2000, the idea of establishing a Museum was canvassed and agreed upon. Recommendation No 3, adopted by the Convention, stated that: "this Convention supports the initiative of the Emigrants Commission to establish a Migration Museum and it recommends that the Maltese Government resources it appropriately."

Fr Alfred Vella (left) with Mgr Philip Calleja announcing Phase 1 of the Migration Museum in July 2011. At the next Convention, held 10 years later (March, 2010), the same topic was raised by a number of speakers. Archbishop Paul Cremona stated (translated from Maltese): "Mgr Philip Calleja and his collaborators have been the messengers highlighting the preoccupation of the Church with our brethren. The Migration Museum

that the Commission is intending to set up will be visible witness to all of this. This Museum will be of great importance at a time when the migration experience in Malta is changing."

Minister Dolores Christina likewise expressed her "appreciation towards the Emigrants' Commission ...also for the initiative which they are now taking with the setting up of the Migration Museum" and appealed to all those who have documents or other material to be donated to this museum.

Curiously, the Act which established a Council for Maltese Living Abroad which has been recently promulgated makes no mention of the need for setting up a migration museum. It merely refers in general terms to the need "to facilitate the maintenance of cultural and linguistic identity of Maltese living abroad" - Section 3 (3)(f).

By March 2010, when the third Convention was held, the concept of having a migration museum was widely accepted and plans were well under way to get the project going. Indeed a time-scale was drawn up and it was expected that the museum would be up and running by 2012.

The Emigrants' Commission had generously planned to refurbish their premises at Castille Place in Valletta for this purpose. It is superbly situated, overlooking the Upper Barrakka and the Grand Harbour, with easy access from all corners of Malta.

Such undertakings are quite costly. It was inconceivable that the Maltese community overseas would be in a position to shoulder the burden of raising the not inconsiderable amount of money required to upgrade the premises and employ staff to run it. It is even debatable if such a museum would ever be self-sufficient in raising funds (from entry fees, restaurant facilities etc) to cover the day-to-day expenses involved.

It was therefore expected that the Government would shoulder at least some of the responsibility of ensuring that the museum becomes a reality and continue to be a success. It is my understanding that funds were promised by the Government, but as far as I know, none have been forthcoming. It would be a great pity indeed if this great project would falter because of the stinginess of a government which has otherwise shown great empathy with the needs of Maltese living abroad.

There is a considerable urgency in ensuring that artefacts and other material essential for such a museum are collected, stored, archived and exposed to the general public without any further delay. With the rapidly ageing population of the original migrants departed from Malta as young individuals, one cannot expect this cohort to be around for much longer. The longer we delay in setting up the museum, the more difficult it is

going to be to collect the material which is being lost at a great rate.

## First meeting of the advisory Council held in Malta

25SEP2012



*Dr Tonio Borg making his welcome address at the first Council Meeting held in Malta. The first meeting of the advisory Council for Maltese Living Abroad took place over two days on Tuesday and Wednesday 18th and 19th September at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Malta's capital city, Valletta.*

The day before commencement of the meeting, the members of the Council had the opportunity to meet with the Prime Minister, the Hon Dr Lawrence Gonzi, at the Auberge de Castille.

### First Day

The first day started with a welcome speech by the Minister for Foreign Affairs, the Hon Dr Tonio Borg, who is the ex-officio chairperson. He spoke about the role of the Council and other aspects relating to what is expected of the Councillors.

In his speech, Dr Borg said that during the last Convention, the Government had made it clear that the time had come to establish a mechanism, preferably set up by Law, that would be an official vehicle of communication and representation of Maltese living abroad. "Today this promise is being fulfilled. This comes after the approval by the House of Representatives late in 2011 of a Law on the Council of Maltese Living Abroad. Following a lengthy process of consultation the representatives of Maltese communities as well as five experts in the field of migration were nominated," said Dr Borg.

Dr Borg said that the Maltese Diaspora is one dispersed in various corners of the world but notwithstanding the distances that might divide our communities and the different environment of each one, a precious line connects them all. He wanted these common factors to

gain more strength by means of a Council that represents in the widest possible terms, the different communities of Maltese abroad. Among these factors he mentioned the interest the communities nurture in their country of residence, their ties to Malta, the preservation of culture and language within our communities and integration in the country of adoption.

Dr Borg said that the Council is in a position to bring great benefits. "Allow me in this respect, to suggest that we come up with doable proposals rather than grandiose projects that could, in view of their intrinsic ambitious goals, die at inception. It goes without saying that there are small things that we can do; more scholarships and aide to Maltese language teachers and students, more knowledge on the history of migration in Malta, more recognition in Malta on the fact that the idea of migration has ended and more emphasis on the concept of a Maltese generation that lives both in Malta and abroad," said Dr Borg.

Dr Borg said that urged the members of the Council to work together to ensure the success of the Council. "Definitely, we need to show the unity we have, so that the Maltese communities, in Sydney, Melbourne, Toronto or San Francisco, or in any other city or country were Maltese have established their home feel that this Council is theirs," said Dr Borg.

Dr Borg said that Malta is small and its resources are also equally small. Yet together we can establish structures without all the pomp and circumstance that can promote Maltese Culture abroad; in particular in countries where we have embassies that can assist. "The agenda for these two days is long, and we will not discuss everything during this first meeting. I encourage all Maltese living abroad to understand that this is their Council; even those Maltese communities that due to the small number of members are not represented in the Council," said Dr Borg.

With these words of encouragement, Dr Borg declared open the first meeting of the Council for Maltese living abroad. Dr Borg then introduced the Hon Dr Mario de Marco, Minister for Tourism, Culture and the Environment (MTCE) who made a speech about the Maltese Cultural Institute and how this plays a critical role in the implementation of the Government's international cultural policy.

In the afternoon there were presentations by the various delegates from the various regions, namely, Australia, Canada, the United Kingdom, the United States as well as the European Union. A special presentation about passports was presented by Mr Gaetano Vella, Director of Passports and Mrs Linda Zahra, Director of the Public Registry.

The first day concluded with a discussion about procedural matters, relating particularly to setting up mechanisms of teleconferencing, preparation of annual

reports and other relating house-keeping issues. At the close of the day session, members proceeded to the Emigrants Commission to be shown the Migration museum. This has now reached an advanced stage of preparation and there are already several facilities for the electronic viewing of many aspects of the migration history.

### Second Day

The following day, Wednesday 19th September, was taken up with a discussion of Article 3 of the Council for Maltese Living Abroad Act 2011, dealing with the various responsibilities of the Council under the Act. Prof Joe Pirota acted as moderator for this session.

Over lunch, the group paid a visit to the President of Malta, HE Dr George Abela, who welcomed and chatted informally with the individual members. The meeting came to an end with rapporteurs summarising the key topics and issues discussed at the 2-day meeting.

All meeting participants felt that the objectives set for the Council's first meeting had been met. Several views about a whole range of issues were discussed, and several recommendations were made. The intention is for Council members to communicate electronically over the next twelve months to conduct Council business and develop further the details of these recommendations before its next face-to-face meeting to take in Malta a year from now.

The members of this Council are as follows:

1. Mr Lawrence Dimech and Mr Gaetano Pace from New South Wales, Aust
2. Prof Maurice Cauchi and Dr Edwin Borg Manché from Victoria, Australia
3. Mr Frank Scicluna from other states in Australia
4. Mr Larry Zahra u Mr Louis Vella from United States of America
5. Mr Joseph Scerri from Canada
6. Mr Bernard Scerri from United Kingdom
7. Mr Franklin Mamo from Europe

The five Maltese community experts living abroad that were chosen by the Prim Minister after consultation with the Opposition are:



1. Dr Roderic Bovingdon (Australia)
2. Fr Alfred Vella (Migrants Commission, Malta)
3. Mr Joseph

Muscat (Gozo)

4. Ms Carmen Galea (Canada)
5. Ms Rosalie Rivett (United Kingdom)

The Secretary of the Council is Ms Doris Zammit.

## HON JENNIFER RANKINE MP

### MINISTER FOR MULTICULTURAL AFFAIRS

#### VISITS MALTA

*Mr Nicholas Bonello welcoming Minister Jennifer Rankine on 27 September 2012*

The Hon Jennifer Rankine MP, Minister for Multicultural Affairs in the South Australia Government paid a visit to the ANZAC Memorial in Floriana. Chairman of the ANZAC Memorial Committee Malta, Mr Nicholas Bonello, welcomed her to the Argotti Botanical Gardens where the Memorial is being erected. It is in the final stages of completion.



Joining Mr Bonello in welcoming the Hon Minister were Committee members of the ANZAC Memorial Malta, the Maltese Australian Association, the Friends of Australia Association, the Memorial sculptor

Ganni Bonnici and his wife Pauline. Mr Bonnici was the winner of the competition for the best memorial design and also the sculptor of the two figures which will be cast in Bronze in the coming days.

Mr Lawrence Dimech from Sydney who was in Malta for the first meeting of the advisory Council of Maltese Living Abroad, was also among the gathering who welcomed the Minister.

The Malta-EU Steering and Action Committee (MEUSAC) and the Australian High Commission in Malta organised a seminar on Multiculturalism. This event was opened by the Hon. Jennifer Rankine MP, Minister for Multicultural Affairs of South Australia.

South Australian Minister, Jennifer Rankine, laid a wreath at Pieta Military, Malta. Ms Rankine also visited Addolorata Cemetery where she took the time to study a number of personal inscriptions.

Jennifer Rankine had appointments with Maltese parliamentarians and other dignitaries. She called Malta - a little paradise in the mediterranean. The Hon Consul for Malta, Frank Scicluna, assisted the minister in the formulation of her program during her visit to the Island of Malta.

### New High Commissioner to Malta

Media release  
11 October 2012





Foreign Minister Bob Carr today announced **Jane Lambert** as Australia's next High Commissioner to Malta, with non-resident accreditation to Tunisia. Ms Lambert is expected to take up her appointment in December 2012, replacing Ms Anne Quinane.

Ms Lambert is a career officer with the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade and has previously served as Deputy High Commissioner to South Africa, Counsellor at the Australian High Commission in Nigeria, and First Secretary at the Australian Embassy to the European Union, Belgium and Luxembourg. She was most recently Director of the Department's Pakistan Section. Ms Lambert holds a Master of Arts degree in Public Policy from the Australian National University, and a Bachelor of Arts degree from Flinders University. She speaks French.

Australia's 164,000-strong Maltese community is the world's largest outside Malta. Recent diplomatic engagement between the two countries includes a state visit to Australia by Malta's President Abela and Foreign Minister Borg in 2011 and a visit to Malta by Minister Carr in April 2012.

Australia and Malta share an interest in developments in North Africa and the Middle East and have provided humanitarian assistance and resettlement to refugees fleeing conflict and instability in the Horn of Africa.

Australia and Tunisia co-operate on agricultural productivity and food security through the Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research's conservation agriculture project based in Tunis. Recent diplomatic engagement includes a visit to Tunis by the Prime Minister's Special Envoy Bill Fisher in August 2012.

Two-way trade between Australia and Malta totalled \$A115 million in 2010-11, principally comprising Australian exports of margarine, cheese, machinery parts and ships and boats. Imports from Malta include medical equipment and plastics.

Two-way trade between Australia and Tunisia total approximately \$20 million a year, principally comprising exports of Australian beef and other meats, and imports of Tunisian clothing and electrical equipment.

Australia and Malta enjoy a warm and productive partnership based on shared values and interests, underpinned by strong people-to-people links.

The 100,000-strong Australian-Maltese community, the largest outside of Malta, has contributed greatly to the multicultural fabric of Australia. Bilateral agreements with Malta covering immigration, double taxation, health services, social security, air services, and working holiday maker arrangements support these community links.

Australia and Malta share a range of common interests including a high level of support for Commonwealth issues, strong commitment to the United Nations and the Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM) process of dialogue and cooperation.

In the European Union, Malta has been strongly supportive of recent advances in Australia-EU relations. The close relationship between Australia and Malta is enhanced by the Australia-EU Partnership Framework which has put Australia-EU relations on a modern framework, the Australian High Commission said.

It said Malta is attractive as a commercial base in the Mediterranean and offers niche market opportunities for Australian companies.



**WE WISH YOU AND YOUR LOVED ONES  
A VERY HAPPY CHRISTMAS AND  
A PROSPEROUS AND PEACEFUL  
NEW YEAR 2013**

**Josie and Frank Scicluna**