

**Commission:** Court of Justice

**Issue:** How to eradicate gender, homophobic, xenophobic, racist and anti-Semitic conflicts on a European scale?

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Cyprus and Malta, are two island nations situated in the Mediterranean Sea. Despite their size, these islands have played important roles throughout history, blending influences from various civilizations. The current government of Cyprus is under the control of Nicos Anastasiades, elected president in 2013 and re-elected in 2018 by a population of around 1.2 million people. Cyprus is located in the eastern part of the Mediterranean Sea, its capital being Nicosia. The official languages are Greek and Turkish, as well as the ethnicities. This island gained independence from the United Kingdom on August 16th 1960. 4 years later, on September 21, 1964 Malta also gained its independence from the United Kingdom. Keeping as official languages Maltese and English. With a population close to 514,000 people, and its capital being Valletta, Malta is an archipelago located in the central Mediterranean Sea, south of Sicily (Italy).

The governments of Cyprus and Malta are both parliamentary democracies functioning with multi-party systems. The current leaders play a crucial role in implementing national policies across various domains including diplomacy, economy, education, and healthcare.

Let's take a deeper look into each country's current situation when it comes to politics.

It's important to keep in mind that Anastasiades (Cyprus's President) is both the head of state and head of government of Cyprus. He is a member of the conservative DISY (Democratic Rally) party. Anastasiades has played a crucial role in negotiations to resolve the Cyprus conflict. As of today, Cyprus is a Presidential Republic. The Cypriot government is composed of ministers appointed by the president and approved by the Parliament. The Parliament of Cyprus is unicameral and consists of 56 members elected for a five-year term. Political stability in Cyprus varies, but the country has experienced periods of political tension due to the issue of partition between the Greek and Turkish communities.

Malta on the other hand, is a Parliamentary Republic. Malta's current president of the Republic is George Vella, and serves as the head of state, while executive authority is vested in the Prime Minister (Robert Abela) who is the head of government. The Parliament of Malta, known as the House of Representatives, is the unicameral legislative body responsible for making laws (consisting of 69 members). The government structure of Malta is characterized by a multi-party system, with the two main political parties being the Labour Party (Partit Laburista) and the Nationalist Party (Partit Nazzjonalista). Elections are held every five years, and the party that secures the majority of seats in Parliament forms the government.

Racism is a global phenomenon; but different countries are underpinned by their own unique socio-demographic histories; we, representatives of Cyprus and Malta, are no exception.

Looking at our main issue in the EU 2030 zero violence objective, we may wonder how we can eradicate gender, homophobic, xenophobic, racist and anti-Semitic conflicts on a European scale? This issue is extremely complex, It involves addressing prejudices, discrimination, and societal attitudes that perpetuate these forms of hatred and intolerance.

Representing Cyprus and Malta, we are also confronted with those challenges. Despite our relatively small populations, we are not immune to gender-based violence, discrimination against minorities, or hate crimes. Both countries have taken steps to fight against discrimination and promote

social inclusion, but more efforts are needed to address prejudices. Cyprus has for years been a traditional exporter of migrants. As a former British Colony, many Cypriots migrated to the UK, as well as other destinations such as Australia, the United States, South Africa; in fact the number of Cypriots living abroad nears half the population of the island. However, today, it has been transformed into a society which acts as “host” to immigrants, from different countries, who occupy a range of employment positions, from laborers, to professionals and entrepreneurs as well as retired persons. The Parliamentary Commissions Reports refer to ways of enhancing the rights of migrant workers. In particular, the Report by the Human Rights Commission is very critical of the existence of racism and xenophobia in Cyprus. Many racial stereotypes exist and construes the presence of migrant workers as a problem. Since 2004, the year in which we, Malta, have entered the European Union, migratory flows to this little island in the Mediterranean Sea have exponentially increased. The influx of a new and diverse population has been accompanied by the inevitable challenges that follow a process as complex as the integration and coexistence of people from a wide variety of cultures. Even though Black and Muslim communities in Malta are found to be particularly affected by racism and inequality, with asylum seekers and refugees being the most vulnerable groups, we currently host over 115,000 non-Maltese citizens, comprising about 22% of our total population.

One of our legal commissioners of the Republic of Cyprus, Ms. Leda Koursoumba, emphasized that since 2012, Cyprus has made significant steps in combating racial discrimination by implementing several national action plans. Despite the economic challenges facing the country, Cyprus remains committed to advancing efforts in nondiscrimination and harmonizing its national legislation with various international instruments. However, Ms. Koursoumba underscored that due to the illegal occupation of 36.2% of the country by the Turkish army, the Government of the Republic of Cyprus faces obstacles in monitoring the enforcement of non-discrimination measures and the principles of the Convention across its territory. Furthermore, Ms. Koursoumba noted that the Penal Code was amended in 2015 to criminalize public incitement to discrimination and violence against individuals based on their sexual orientation or gender identity. Later on, in 2017, the Penal Code underwent further amendments to strengthen the national legal framework concerning racial discrimination. These amendments require that all instances of racism, xenophobia, and homophobia constitute aggravating circumstances before the judiciary, further emphasizing Cyprus's commitment to fighting discrimination in all forms. In Malta, we actively collaborate with other European countries, institutions of the European Union, and international organizations to develop policies and programs aimed at combating gender conflict, homophobia, xenophobia, racism, and anti-Semitism. The country has adopted robust laws and policies designed to address all forms of discrimination, including those based on gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, religion, and other protected characteristics. For instance, Malta's Equal Opportunities Act specifies penalties for discriminatory practices. Furthermore, Malta has been at the forefront of advancing LGBT+ rights in Europe, having legalized same-sex marriage and enacted comprehensive anti-discrimination legislation to safeguard the rights of LGBT+ individuals.

Having both joined the European Union in 2004, we look forward to addressing issues like racism, sexism, homophobia, xenophobia and anti-semitism. We know it requires comprehensive strategies at various levels, such as legislative measures, education, awareness-raising campaigns, and community engagement. It involves promoting diversity, tolerance, and respect for human rights as core values of European societies. As Cyprus and Malta we are ready to highlight the benefits of European cooperation and solidarity between Member States to address common challenges.