



SOVRANO MILITARE ORDINE OSPEDALIERO
DI SAN GIOVANNI DI GERUSALEMME DI RODI E DI MALTA

143rd IPU ASSEMBLY

Madrid, 26 – 30 November 2021

General Debate on

**Contemporary challenges to democracy:
Overcoming division and building community**

Statement

by Amb. Daniele Verga

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Mr. President,

Distinguished Delegates,

on behalf of the Sovereign Order of Malta and myself, I would like to thank the Governing Council and all the members of the IPU for the admission of the Order of Malta to the Inter-Parliamentary Union as an Observer.

It is an honour and a privilege for the Order to be admitted to the IPU, the prominent global organization of national Parliaments, which are the temple of democracy, rule of law, dialogue, cooperation and protection of fundamental rights and human dignity.

Principles and values which the Order of Malta shares, as witnessed by its millenary humanitarian mission in favour of the weak, the sick, the marginalised and the needy.

We are aware of the challenges facing states and societies: extremism and political radicalisation; economic, social and gender inequalities; terrorism; racial and religious intolerance; population movements, of which migrants and refugees are the most needy; climate change and environmental protection; human trafficking and new forms of slavery which are the scourge of our time; technological advances with their benefits (e.g. in the field of telemedicine) and alarming scenarios (e.g. the dark web); the relationship between Artificial Intelligence and Ethics.

The Order of Malta, a neutral, impartial and independent faith-based institution, is willing to offer its contribution of ideas and proposals and to share its experience and expertise to reinforce confidence and trust in the representative institutions and to enhance the culture of dialogue, solidarity, cooperation and mutual respect.

The Inter-Parliamentary Union and the Sovereign Order of Malta, through our Permanent Mission in Geneva, have established a good and mutually beneficial working relationship, with many areas of common interest, especially interfaith dialogue, peacebuilding, human rights and rule of law.

With these sentiments and promising perspectives, I look forward to an intense and fruitful cooperation between the Inter-Parliamentary Union and the Sovereign Order of Malta and I wish the 143rd Assembly of the Inter-Parliamentary Union every success for the benefit of inclusive societies and mutual understanding among peoples.

Thank you.