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# Press Release

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**PRESS RELEASE BY THE MINISTRY WITHIN THE OFFICE OF THE PRIME MINISTER**

*The strong voice of young people is the next natural step towards a strong and open social dialogue*  
– Carmelo Abela

The strong voice of young people is the next natural step towards a strong and open social dialogue – this is the vision of Minister within the Office of the Prime Minister, responsible for social dialogue, Carmelo Abela. He stated that he would like to see the strengthening of youth activism in democratic life as part of the social dialogue in the country. Minister Abela said that while he is satisfied with the ongoing work in terms of formal social dialogue between the government, workers’ representatives as well as employers – facilitated also through the work of the MCESD – there is room for young people to do well and give their contribution to the future of the country. Minister Carmelo Abela said this while meeting with representatives from the JEF and MaltMun youth organisations. During this meeting, the organisations spoke about the help they received from MEUSAC in order to carry out their projects in the field of youth activism with debates focusing on topics of a national, European and global nature.

Representatives of the youth organisations expressed their gratitude for the opportunity they were given to discuss their views and their work with the Cabinet member. The two organisations discussed with the minister the political documents they have formulated throughout their projects aiming to strengthen the skills of young people in relation to decision-making and opinion building on issues such as democracy and apathy among communities of young Europeans.

“It is important that when as a country we speak about local or European issues we ensure that the voice of young people is being heard. It is important for youth organisations to come together and contribute to a full and open social dialogue. We would like you to come up with your own ideas. We want you to analyse the situation and approach us with suggestions. You are the leaders of today. In order to build a future together, everyone must be involved”, said Minister Abela.

The minister also mentioned how this government believes in young people, referring to them as the leaders of today and tomorrow, and so they should in turn take an interest in the decisions that are taken, as they directly affect their future. It is with this in mind that, back in 2018, the government notably amended the Constitution so that the voting age would be revised. Malta became the second country in the European Union to reduce the voting age for national and European parliamentary elections to 16 years, after having been granted the right to vote in local council elections in 2014.

Minister Abela appealed to young people not to let COVID stop them from dreaming and remaining active in society. He stated that through technology, they are still able to be creative and keep making

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**Attachments: photos + footage**

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their voices heard, and encouraged them to motivate other young people to join youth organisations as the skills acquired through activism are in fact skills that go beyond those acquired in formal education, paving the way to strong and holistic adults.

Minister Abela thanked MEUSAC for their professional service and for the way they assist beneficiaries so that they may achieve the required levels – in both the organisational and financial fields – to be able to benefit from existing opportunities.