

## CLOSING ADDRESS

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FRIDAY, 15<sup>TH</sup> MAY 2009

We are coming to the end of our three-day Conference “Zooming on Sustainability”.

During the past days we have discussed various issues relating to Sustainability. Particularly during the workshops, we focused specifically on Environmental Sustainability, Socio-economic Sustainability and Cultural Sustainability.

Moreover, these three days have provided you with the opportunity to exchange views in relation to what is happening in the various Member States represented here - Bulgaria, France, Greece, Italy, Malta, Spain and the United Kingdom - as well as in our towns and municipalities.

You have shared the difficulties encountered in your endeavors to tackle sustainability issues, including the lack of resources and administrative difficulties / obstacles.

Now what?

Let me take up the suggestion made by the Minister for Resources and Rural Affairs yesterday. He stated that rather than merely “Zooming on Sustainability” we should be “Zooming on and Acting for Sustainability”. Easier said than done. May I therefore reiterate what I already expressed yesterday: the need for greater synergies between national, regional and local authorities as well as civil society. Local government and civil society need to become more aggressive in pursuing the goal of Sustainability. A greater sense of Empowerment is needed that will overcome any temptation to feel helpless in front of the big issues that confront us.

MEUSAC is privileged to have given you the opportunity to come together to address the challenges and to map out a possible way forward that takes into consideration the particular circumstances of each Member State as well as our different and diverse localities.

I would thus like to end by thanking all those who made this Conference possible:

- all participants, local and foreign;
- all speakers, chairpersons, moderators and rapporteurs;
- our sponsors: DG Education and Culture, the Parliamentary Secretariat for Public Dialogue & Information, Malta International Airport and the Malta Tourism Authority;
- staff at The Westin Dragonara, Interpreters, sound engineers;
- MEUSAC staff, particularly the organizing committee with a special word of thanks to Brian Pace and Joe Sciberras .

We look forward towards strengthening the excellent level of cooperation with local councils in Malta and Gozo in order to achieve the target set out for our localities - that of having sustainable localities in our islands.

Thank you.