

INSULEUR FORUM 2019

Grand Hotel Imġarr, Gozo 25 October 2019

CONCLUDING ADDRESS

Good afternoon ladies and gentlemen! It is with pride that we are now concluding these two days of meetings which Insuleur held here at the Grand Hotel, on our island of Gozo. The General Assembly held yesterday and the Insuleur Forum 2019 on the *Digital Transformation of European Islands* held today, both events held because of the presidency of the Gozo Business Chamber of INSULEUR, celebrating also the twenty years of life of the Chamber.

First of all a word of thanks to all those who contributed immensely to yesterday's and today's organization. The indefatigable team at the Gozo Business Chamber headed by Daniel and including Jack, Joanne and Gian Luca who together with Sylvia were responsible for the organization of the events of these last two days.

Thanks is due to Gozo Minister Dr Justyne Caruana who has supported the Chamber in its endeavours throughout these last years and for leaving no stone unturned in the holding of the Insuleur General Assembly and Forum here on Gozo.

Thanks are also to all the speakers of yesterday and of today and for all those of you present who have participated in yesterday's General Assembly and today's Forum. Our heartfelt thanks to you all.

In our rumblings on Digitalization today, it came to my mind that digitalization amongst other things is there to create networks and this in turn resonates the name of our association INSULEUR, the Network of Chambers of Commerce and Industry of Islands of the European Union. It is this Network that we need to consolidate, this Network that we need to grow up.

We all come from islands in Europe, some small and other larger islands, but we all have a common origin, we have common sufferings, we have common disadvantages. But we need to turn all these negative aspects into opportunities which will help us thrive.

You will all remember Aesop's fables from your school days. There was one called *The Old Man and his sons*. An old man has a number of sons who constantly quarrel with each other. As he nears death he calls them to him and gives them an object lesson in the need for unity. Having bound a bundle of sticks together, he asks his sons to break them. When they fail, he undoes the bundle and gets his sons to break each stick singly. In the same way, he teaches them, that though each can be overcome alone, they are invincible combined.

You saw the old Latin adage underneath the fable drawing, and now I am presenting it on a Dutch gold ducat, *concordia res parvae crescent*, which means that small things grow bigger through Unity. In our case we can say that small islands grow stronger through Unity. There is strength in unity. What we can achieve alone is nothing compared to that we can achieve when we put our voice together, when we walk together, when we dream and act together. This is the message with which I opened up the General Assembly yesterday and with which I conclude this Forum now.

To conclude. In my welcome address, which you will find in the printed book of the Forum, I addressed the Insuleur delegates and told them that we in Gozo intend meeting you with the same grace that Calypso welcomed Ulysses in Homer's Iliad. When Ulysses was lured to our fabled island, Hermes who visited to seek him out, was offered by Calypso ambrosia and nectar, the food and drink of the gods. We could not offer you ambrosia and nectar but we hope you have had a pleasant and fruitful stay with us. Thank you for being with us.

Joseph Borg