

Mediterranean Academy of Diplomatic Studies (MEDAC)

Arraiolos Malta 2017 **13th Meeting of the Heads of State of the Arraiolos Group**



Med Agenda — Special Issue

MEDAC Publications in Mediterranean IR and Diplomacy

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Malta, December 2017

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It is a pleasure and an honour for Malta to host the 13th Meeting of the Arraiolos Group. I am also pleased to welcome the largest Arraiolos gathering of non-executive Presidents of the European Union, which includes, for the very first time, three female European Heads of State.

*Dear colleagues,
Your Excellencies,
Distinguished guests,
Dear friends.*

Let me take this opportunity to welcome you to the Maltese Islands.

Malta's geo-strategic position, in the middle of the Mediterranean, means that we have always been at the crossroads of civilisations and continents, and a melting pot of peoples and cultures.

For this reason, the importance of dialogue and the building of mutual peace are values of essential importance, both to our way of life and to our vision for the future of our European Union.

I am confident that this meeting is an opportunity for us to deepen this sense of dialogue, and the discovery of shared opportunities for peace, while focusing on issues of pressing importance in our regions and across our Union.

This year also happens to mark the 60th Anniversary of the signing of the important Treaties of Rome, which laid the foundations for the European Union as we know it today.

At a time when our Union is prioritising its attention on the promotion of a European Pillar of Social Rights, I believe that it is essential for us to discuss the social dimension of our Union.

I believe that it is also our responsibility, as Heads of State, to ensure that questions of social justice, of socio-economic inclusion, and of democratic participation are kept high on the agenda of our respective countries, and across our family of nations.

Furthermore, this year's Arraiolos Meeting will also be, as our previous meetings were, an opportunity for us to increase the visibility of the particular challenges and opportunities within our regions, with a special emphasis on the situation being faced in the Euro-Mediterranean area.

Excellencies, dear colleagues,

I augur that our deliberations, throughout the Arraiolos Meeting, shall be guided by our universal values of positive peace and holistic wellbeing, for the benefit of our communities, our societies, and our European family of nations.

The theme for this year's meeting, **"Crossing Borders"**, is an invitation for all of us to reflect on how Europe can rediscover its core social

values, reclaim its social model, and achieve higher levels of solidarity and inclusion.

During our deliberations, I am confident that social justice will feature prominently, as a basic condition for European prosperity and Euro-Mediterranean security.

Let us ensure that our deliberations will emphasise the need for Europe to be a global leader, once again, on issues that affect the quality of life of all peoples.

The decision to focus on such a complex and intriguing theme will, I am sure, help us to create an important dialogue, bridging our diverse opinions, while also creating opportunities for connection and mutual enrichment.

I sincerely believe that creating such opportunities for dialogue is especially necessary, in particular, at this important juncture in the history of our world. We must admit, that unfortunately, many of our nations are currently facing social and political tensions and uncertainties.

In response to these tensions and uncertainties, it is my firmly held belief that we cannot implement economic globalisation, without a parallel investment in strategies for social justice.

We cannot be afraid to tackle pressing questions of poverty, social exclusion, and economic precarity, which are of such direct impact on the communities and societies of our nations.

Let us therefore use this platform to promote closer collaborations, across the borders of our nations, to face some of the major challenges of the twenty-first century.

Many of the important issues we face today are global in their reach. These include questions of economic globalisation; processes of migration; social uncertainties; the threat of transnational crime; and the promotion of global peace and security.

Such challenges can only be addressed with a united approach. Meeting these challenges requires that we all work together, to transcend our borders, as one human family.

First of all, I believe that we need to address the harmful effects of climate change, which are being felt across our world, with a holistic and united approach.

I am pleased to note that, even in yesterday's State of the Union speech, His Excellency Jean-Claude Juncker, European Commission President, highlighted the critical issue of climate change.

"Europe will ensure we make our planet great again. It is the shared heritage of all of humanity."

For this reason, we must act now to do more, to reduce greenhouse gas emissions across our nations.

We must make the necessary progress towards a low carbon energy future, for all.

We must learn from the good practices of our neighbours, some of whom are present here as stakeholders in the Arraiolos meeting, and share our knowledge in pursuit of one common goal for a better world.

We must work together to find innovative ways for our nations to produce and to use clean and renewable energy.

For this reason, our holistic endeavours and collaborations are important, to implement the mandate of the Paris Agreement on Climate Change, and the United Nations' Agenda 2030, with its seventeen Sustainable Development Goals.

We all know what must be done, as these Sustainable Development Goals offer us a global strategy, which promotes shared prosperity for the building of peace, and a global social solidarity approach.

It is so important for us to focus our attention on the values which promote a universal culture of respect, to ensure that the intrinsic dignity of each and every individual is celebrated.

I am confident that our discussions shall be effectively guided, along these lines, by the expert contributions of our two academic facilitators.

Professor Carmel Borg shall focus on the idea of reclaiming Europe's social mandate, and Professor Stephen Calleya shall tackle the management of security challenges in the Euro-Mediterranean region.

It is my hope that, throughout this meeting, we shall become more sensitive and more aware of the particular nature of our respective situations.

Moreover, I hope that, by sitting around the same table and engaging in frank discussions, we shall find new ways of working together to meet our shared challenges and maximise our shared opportunities.

Each and every one of us has the potential to spread a strong message of solidarity, of peace, and of social justice, within our nations and across Europe.

On concluding, let me once again quote yesterday's State of the Union address, delivered by the President of the European Commission, who said:

"Now is the time to build a more united, stronger and more democratic Europe for 2025."

In this spirit, I urge us all to endeavour to ensure that no citizens or residents in our countries are left behind.

We must continue building stronger processes of democratic participation within our societies, so that the citizens of Europe will feel a sense of ownership over our European Union.

Finally, let us ensure that the outcomes of our deliberations will have a positive effect in the lives of all our peoples, across our communities, and for the ultimate benefit of our entire European family of nations.



Inaugural Session of the Malta Arraiolos Meeting 2017 at the Grandmaster's Palace, Valletta



Inaugural Session of the Malta Arraiolos Meeting 2017 at the Grandmaster's Palace, Valletta



Inaugural Session of the Malta Arraiolos Metting 2017: The Presidents of Croatia, Hungary, Poland, Austria and Estonia (L to R).



Keynote Welcome Address by H.E. Marie-Louise Coleiro Preca, the President of Malta



H.E. Marie-Louise Coleiro Preca, the President of Malta delivering the Keynote Welcome Address.



Malta Arraiolos Meeting 2017



H.E. Marie-Louise Coleiro Preca, the President of Malta welcoming H.E. Frank-Walter Steinmeier, the President of Germany



H.E. Marie-Louise Coleiro Preca, the President of Malta welcoming H.E. Borut Pahur, the President of Slovenia



H.E. Kolinda Grabar-Kitarović, President of Croatia signing the Official Visitors Book, Tapestry Chamber, The Palace, Valletta.



H.E. János Áder, President of Hungary, signing the Official Visitors Book, Tapestry Chamber, The Palace, Valletta.



A view to the Malta Arraiolos Meeting 2017, the Palace, Valletta.



Group photo – the Malta Arraiolos Meeting 2017
13th Meeting of the Arraiolos Group – 13 Heads of State.



H.E. Sergio Mattarella, President of Italy, signing the Official Visitors book in the Tapestry Chamber, The Palace, Valletta.



The First Working Session at the Malta Arraiolos Meeting 2017 addressed by Professor Carmel Borg, University of Malta.

Reclaiming Social Europe in the Shadows of a Global Predatory Economy

Prof. Carmel Borg
University of Malta

Grandmaster's Palace, Valletta,
14th September 2017

As the third millenium approaches the end of its second decade, the ideal of equality continues to be threatened by a global value system that is soft on the accumulation and concentration of wealth and power to the detriment of the collective good and to the sustainability of communities in general. Europe is not immune to the encroachment of a global, predatory economic model that has eaten into the ideal of solidarity and the common good.

Two years from the signing of the UN's Agenda 2030, my work-in-progress, entitled 'Conversations with the Poor in Europe', and other evidence-based research projects, indicate that democracy continues to distance itself from social justice, diluting its strength as an ideal space for the affirmation of human-rights-based quality of life. Increasingly, the apparata of the state - parliaments, political parties and the corporate media in particular - are popularly perceived as dragging their feet in championing the plight of the most vulnerable while generating consent around political processes and legal frameworks that favour trans-national capital, wealth and power. The social contract that many European states had negotiated and renegotiated with their peoples, starting soon after the second world war and successfully sustained for three decades, has been substantially eroded by a world economic order, officialised, on the European front, by a political leader

who in October 1987 declared that “there is no such thing as a society”. While generating unimaginable wealth, such a world economic order has weakened social cohesion and the value system that had supported it, sacrificing the dignity and humanity of millions of European and international citizens and workers on the alter of competitiveness, flexibility, growth at all cost, balanced and surplus budgets, austerity measures and stability (read labour pacification). In the process, partially as a result of their softness and appeasement when faced by the ruthlessness of such an economic order, European states, to varying degrees, are facing a legitimacy crisis marked by increasing citizen frustration, exhaustion, distrust, antipathy, indifference towards politics and politicians, and a shift to far-right politics with strong, nationalist, nativist and xenophobic content.

The Erosion of Solidarity

Social justice is premised on solidarity among citizens operating within institutions of civil society that constitute the state. Solidarity implies communion with the other, mutual support stemming from genuine care for the other and a social ecology that is defined by the common good. Informed by economic relations where growth is heavily dependent on rates of individual consumption, increasing numbers of Europeans are becoming ever more alienated from their neighbour, worker, homeless, precarious, poor ‘other’. Spaces, meant to be communal and collective, are becoming ever more atomised into micro-habitats which are reduced to private zones of delusory or real consumption. Within such ecologies, consumption dictates the value of people. Citizens reduced to private consumers, competing with the known or ‘unknown other’ for visibility through consumption rates and patterns, and the commodification of anything ranging from education and health to relationships and one’s own body and identity that is open to theft and compromise. Such a context, characterised by multi-directional and omni-present bombardment of perceived needs and consumables as objects of desire, defies solidarity by emotionally and physically distancing human beings from one another, turning vulnerability into a distant spectacle that at best ends with momentary acts of charity that do nothing to challenge the asymmetrical status quo fuelled by

individualism, competition, short-term gratification, liquidity and disposability.

In his book *Work, Consumerism and the New Poor*, the late Zygmunt Bauman, from whom I earlier borrowed the term liquidity, remarks that to be poor in a consumer society is to be totally unnecessary. I also identify with Bauman's assertion that this construction of the 'poor other' as a burden is exacerbated by the fact that social-class consciousness and international solidarity have largely evaporated on many fronts, psychologically, ideologically, culturally and organisationally. The poor are there, out on their own, frozen in material, emotional, psychological and social wilderness.

Unfit for the consumer treadmill, as cynically described by the Polish sociologist and public intellectual, the humanity of the poor becomes disposable, bureaucratised and invisible to many. As the poor are dehumanised, in the political theorist Hannah Arendt's words, quoted in Bauman, they become the responsibility of no one. Forty years ago, eight boys from Barbiana and their teacher Don Lorenzo Milani, claimed that the poor have few friends in parliament. I would dare say that such a bold statement by a priest, then marginalised by both the political as well as the ecclesiastical establishment, is still relevant to this very day (Borg, Cardona and Caruana, 2013; Borg and Grech, 2014).

What is eroding solidarity even further, in Europe and beyond, is that neoliberalism (euphemism for savage capitalism) has not only made many poor poorer but has also simultaneously declassed vast numbers of middle-class families. Many traditionally-comfortable, middle-class individuals are consumed by the possibility of falling into the precarious trap. Promised dreams, based on the mantra "education, education and education", and glamorised lives reinforced by the corporate media, are shattered, on a daily basis, by a life of uncertainty, a career of definite contracts, programmed redundancy and the inability to visualise one's life on a long-term basis; existential uncertainty that divides the sufferer and turns life in an ongoing, pay-check to pay-check struggle for survival. To give one indication of how aspirations and hard work are not matched by a fulfilling life is the statistic that emerged from the

latest issue of the 2015 European Working Conditions Survey, where an average of 28% of employees in Europe are overqualified for their work, and if international trends are followed, these numbers are bound to increase as more and more youth respond to the mantra.

Social and political solitude is further exacerbated by fragmentation, single-issue politics and the fact that there is no real international movement of solidarity left to inspire, to organise, to conscientise, to resist, to subvert and to act consciously and collectively to counter the hegemony of savage forms of capitalism. As Peter McLaren (2006), the Canadian critical pedagogue would declare (paraphrasing him) – we have lost the ability to dream of and visualise a world that can be, let alone transform the savage, decadent and wasteful world that is. A world where investment in football transfers and boxing vs kickboxing contests overshadows social investments.

While millions are struggling, solidarity at source continues to be depleted through extremely generous tax regimes and through a complex, multi-layered and largely out-of-sight financial highway that allows for fast mobility of finances and capital, leading to billions of Euros lost to tax evasion. This immoral financial infrastructure, together with the largely unethical, albeit legal, pre-distributive promotion of the concepts of flexibility, simplification and efficiency in the recruitment and dismissal of workers, production practices that prey on depressed salaries and income gaps, the privatisation of public services and cuts on social and community services, largely absenting the state from its core ethical responsibility, forms part of a global formula that is disguised as competitiveness; a global recipe that is meant to ease economic invasion and the intensification of neo-colonialism that characterises this latest chapter of capitalism. In this context, reclaiming social Europe implies reclaiming humanity first and assuming moral responsibility for structurally-induced poverty.

A Mutated State

In a global reality where power is transnational and less transparent, the state has mutated from its status as promoter of personal and

collective well-being to a prime strategic partner in the movement of private capital. As a result, less state, sold and indexed universally, as less bureaucracy, is seen, promoted and assessed as good governance and as an important indicator of competitiveness. The invisible hand of the market has transformed the state from an ethics-inspired state into a market and for-profit-investment-oriented state that is intermittently called to pacify and stabilise industrial relations, recalibrate competitiveness and make good for private crises like the financial crisis. The state which fails not only at the level of distribution but also at the level of production of wealth by institutionalising practices such as the so-called 'activation policies' which force the unemployed into precarious work, for which the recommodified worker is often overqualified, in exchange for the receipt of benefits, allowing management practices that divide and isolate workers into outsourced, multiple, micro and loosely-connected production spaces, to mention one intentionally propagated and internationally diffused practice of maximisation of profit, at the producers' expense, and allowing the common citizen to absorb long-term the blast of the financial and job crises.

Precarious Employment

While employment opportunities are on the increase, Europe is experiencing a shift in employment patterns and mobility. An economic scenario which is characterised by ever-increasing polarisation of job opportunities. Of particular interest to economists and social activists operating from a social justice perspective is the shift from poor unemployed to working-poor, with households reproducing poverty despite the fact that they are economically active, and the shift from stable working environments to digital, quasi-anonymous working environments which are isolationist, mobile, unstable, unpredictable, with frequent periods of unemployment, running multiple jobs at the same time, and which are mostly devoid of any social solidarity.

Europe is still enduring one of the longest phases of wage inequality, both in relative (difference between richer people, regions and countries as a multiple of that of poorer ones) and in absolute (differences between

highest income and lowest income) terms. Wage inequality has not improved since 2009 and, in absolute terms, it has degenerated since the aforementioned date. In a report published this year, the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung (FES), describes the situation as stable but absolutely alarming. In the regions worst hit by the the economic recession, only the top quintile was 'highly protected'.

Automation. What Future?

Like the rest of the world, Europe is facing further and accelerated automation of work. Such a predicament presents grave and urgent ethical, moral and political challenges in the context of the discourse on solidarity and social justice. Different scenarios have been simulated including a massive loss of both middle- and working-class employment, particularly jobs in logistics, transport and warehousing with a very recent 2017 report by Citi and the Oxford Martin School indicating that 80% of jobs in retail transportation, warehousing, and logistics are at risk as a result of recent technological developments.

While simulated scenarios disagree on the extent of unemployment that will be created through the intensification of automation, most converge on the probable scenario characterised by the creation of massive surplus labour, partially reskilled, retooled and employed by the market for low wages.

Such simulations generate pertinent questions regarding employment prospects, levels of reskilling, quality of employment, industrial relations, worker conditions in competition with robots that do not engage in struggles for better conditions of work, work tirelessly, are not entitled to benefits, do not distinguish between private and public time, do not seek work-family balance and are gender neutral.

Automation also raises questions regarding the mass movement of workers to zones of wealth creation, predictably urban in nature. Such areas could be the scenes of racial and social-class tensions as the history of high-density living has instructed us. What I would refer to as the Grenfell syndrome could expand and intensify into a severe and dramatic urban crisis.

Other questions that stem from the intensification of automation, and which are directly relevant to social justice regard solidarity at source through taxation and compensation. Will robots be taxed? Will their wealth creation be taxed? Will their invention be considered as primary resource, private wealth leading to further distancing of societies and nations or common wealth of resources? How will the unemployed be compensated? Is a basic income to all, distributed universally and irrespective of one's relationship to production, a viable proposal? Do the discussions, initial experiments, such as the B-MINCOME in Barcelona and the basic income experiment in Finland, and political activism, such as the Basic Income European Network, constitute a prelude to concrete, multi-varied and permanent forms of liveable compensation to a new world economic order? Who will benefit from a basic income? Will it be extended to non-citizens living permanently or temporarily in Europe? How will it be financed and how will the pension phase look like? Will it be financed locally, regionally, nationally or trans-nationally? Will work-related benefits linked to job guarantees be a better solution? Can the basic income approach be counterproductive?

While the basic income debate has made inroads into several international fora, such as the United Nations and OECD, with the latter releasing its first policy brief on the subject, unfortunately several initiatives and potentially great ideas for a socially and economically-just Europe are still marginal by virtue of their high technical content. Visibility and endorsement of potentially socially-viable ideas require a popular movement of alternative visualisers and actors which is very present within the institutions of civil society and in the geographic spaces of ideas, power and actions.

Social Justice in Crisis

In terms of hard facts, evidence produced in the context of Europe's Agenda 2020 indicates that while progress has been registered in certain aspects of social justice like employment rates and lowering of monetary poverty, millions in Europe are still not experiencing social

justice. The Social Justice index of 2016, quoting Eurostat, reveals that nearly a quarter of all EU citizens (23.7%) is currently at risk of poverty or social exclusion. This percentage translates into approximately 118 million human beings whose basic human rights are being denied on a daily basis.

Also, while Eurostat figures for December 2016 reveal that around 20 million EU citizens are unemployed, the 2016 Social Justice index indicates that 7.8% of the at-risk population is working poor. Analysed critically, this particular statistic means that despite their economic engagement people, in large numbers and across the European Union, are working precariously, indefinitely, unprotected by unions and poorly covered by social insurance; economic practices that are structurally stacked against workers' rights, dignity, humanity and well-being. Furthermore, Eurostat statistics (key messages) indicate that:

- Of all groups examined based on their employment status, the unemployed faced the greatest risk of poverty or social exclusion, at 66.6 % in 2015.
- Almost 50 % of all single parents were at risk of poverty or social inclusion in 2015. This was double the average and higher than for any other household type analysed.
- 34.7 % of adults with at most lower secondary educational attainment was at risk of poverty or social exclusion in 2015.
- 65.6 % of children of parents with at most pre-primary and lower secondary education were at risk.
- In 2015, 40.2 % of adults born in a country outside the EU and 25.2 % of those born in a different EU country than the reporting one were at risk of poverty or social exclusion. In comparison, for native citizens, only 21.7 % of the population were at risk.
- EU citizens in rural areas were on average slightly more likely to live in poverty or social exclusion than those living in urban areas (25.5 % compared with 24.0 %) in 2015.
- Although the overall EU share of people living in households with very low work intensity has remained relatively stable at 10.6 % since 2010, the country-specific levels and developments

have differed widely. Moreover, being in work does not necessarily protect against poverty: in 2015, 7.7 % of the working EU population was at risk of poverty even though they were working full time.

The differences between EU countries are dramatic. For example, the Social Justice Index of 2016 reveals a stark North-South divide in the number of children living in poverty and at risk of material deprivation and social exclusion, and a similar divide in the distribution of youth unemployment.

Education and Well-being

While acknowledging that education is not a panacea to the economic, social, and cultural ills of society, the role of education in addressing social justice is unquestionable. PISA 2015 results, like those of Finland and Estonia, two EU countries, represented in the 'Arraiolos Group', reveal that educational systems can successfully intervene in helping children and youth transcend their socio-economic status, confirming that it is possible to provide both quality and quantity education to children from socially disadvantaged backgrounds, with tangible positive results in terms of educational achievement and further education. However, PISA 2015 results also reveal that socio-economic status is still a barrier to educational success in a number of countries in Europe, including countries represented here in the 'Arraiolos Group' and, ultimately to an upwardly mobile, productive social and economic life. In some EU countries, as illustrated by the PISA results, the reproduction of the socio-economic status of one's family remains a formidable roadblock to access to quality education as stipulated by the United Nations Sustainable Goal 4, highlighting the structural nature of socio-economic marginalisation, with low socio-economic status children and youth consistently registering over-representation in statistics dealing with educational failure.

Quantitative and qualitative research conducted by the National Observatory for Living with Dignity, on behalf of the (Maltese) President's Foundation for the Well-being of Society, between 2015

and this year, reveals the human suffering - physical, social, moral and emotional - of materially deprived and socially-excluded youths. What impressed me most in my encounter with marginalised youth is the precarious state of their mental health. Quantitative analysis of big data which includes surveys like the European Mental Health Survey, confirm that mental health issues feature prominently among materially deprived and socially excluded youth who feel 'so down in the dumps that nothing could cheer them up'. Consumption of antidepressants is dramatically high with, according to the same survey, 10% of youth leaving education before age 16 in EU countries reporting taking antidepressants more frequently than people who left formal education later (6% in EU countries), with the most frequent reason for taking this medication for approximately half of both groups was anxiety and depression.

In the area of workers' education, given the rhetoric of lifelong learning, what emerges from the Euro student survey of 2016 is that, on average, workers in Europe who decide to further their learning while working, work an average of 68 hours a week, excluding commuting. This explains the relatively low rate in workers continuing their education. Research also shows that there is a strong positive correlation between education-friendly working environments, social support, flexibility of learning provision by service providers, non-traditional forms of learning, and active, union promotion of learning and workers' take-up of lifelong learning. Access to further learning, like compulsory education is structural and unless it is incentivised, the structural gulf that exists between social classes and their access to wealth and power will be reproduced on a lifelong basis.

The Siege Mentality and the Scorge of Populism

Populism is perhaps one of the obvious symptoms of an estranged citizenship. People responding to calls by opportunist politicians, for an anti-intellectual, anti-media, isolationist and nativist, populist revolts are asking questions that cannot be ignored. Why has Europe, in different ways and in varying degrees, failed the moral and ethical

test of social justice? Why has Europe fallen behind in promoting social solidarity and communal understanding? Why social Europe seems incapable of providing an alternative model to the destructive ideology of profit first dignity and wellbeing later? Why has Europe abandoned social class as a point of reference and allowed itself to fragment and to turn common interests into specialised interests, dividing society into irreconcilable groups? Why has Europe softened its stance on the politics of redistribution? Why are people losing faith in politicians? Why do people feel that corruption is widespread? Why so many people believe that politics is inherently corrupt? Why do many people are convinced that the economy is stacked against them, that the economy is rigged against them? Why has collective action become such a dangerous word? Why is it becoming ever more difficult in Europe and elsewhere to build majority coalitions/movements of solidarity and win elections? Can predatory economic practices such as the outsourcing of precarious work be challenged and reversed?

Meanwhile, the global disorder, the apparent helplessness, ineffective strategising or direct military involvement of the West with regard to growing international conflicts, is leading to humanitarian catastrophes in Syria, Middle East, South Sudan, Yemen and Libya to mention a few examples. Simultaneously, while these dramatic humanitarian events unfold before us, the migrant other, particularly the Islamic other, is being constructed and targeted as a potential terrorist, rapist, wage depresser and parasite.

Walls, barbed wire, calls for push backs, deportations and resettlements are symptomatic of a paranoia that has gripped Europe in relation to the most vulnerable of its citizens and residents, the most materially deprived and socially excluded other within the European Union. Hate speech is becoming routine and largely unchecked.

As the favourite scapegoat, the migrant 'Other' is perceived and projected as the root cause of the malaise that defines contemporary European societies. In its simplistic narratives and emotionally-manipulative communications, populism often blames migrants for anything ranging from depressed economies and limited job

opportunities to the islamisation of Europe and the threat to liberal democracy. The return to fortified European states and to inter-state squabbling over who should shoulder the responsibility and carry the perceived burden of migration, is a realistic predicament which threatens to erode the concept of a politically-, economically-, culturally- and socially-inclusive and integrated Europe.

No Peace without Social Justice

In an age where official and sponsored violence are becoming normalised and conceived of as legitimate tools of peace keeping, the distinction between genuine peace, based on revisualised social relations and transformational struggles, and false peace or pacification is urgent. Real peace emerges from an understanding that power operates out of the concrete and historical realities of individuals and groups situated in asymmetrical social and political locations. Such a view prompted Borg and Grech (2017) to ask ethically and politically loaded questions like: who is benefiting from peace arrangements? is peace always desirable? is stability a sign of peace? can peace be imposed? whose peace is being legitimized? How can we best educate for peace?

In the course of answering such questions, we need to emphatically reject dysfunctional peace processes; oppressive and dehumanizing practices employed in the name of stability. Such peace processes contrast heavily with peace initiatives that are informed by cognitive, social, economic and ecological justice, the core message of the UN's resolution on Sustainable Development. Europe is aware that it is failing millions of its citizens and residents, that taken-for-granted rights are not available to a great many EU citizens. The commendable European Pillar of Social rights proposes a concrete road map that reflects my critique of the concrete effects of a predatory economic system; a social model that reclaims social rights for all. Measures that are meant to re/connect European citizens and residents to the equity and accessibility grid - (quoting from the European Pillar of Social Rights) equal access to education, gender equality, equal opportunities, fair working conditions, fair wages, secure employment, dialogue with

workers, work-life balance, decent accommodation, unemployment benefits and minimum income.

Europe lacks a coherent strategy in protecting its citizens. At this stage, and by way of concluding my intervention, I ask: can a sovereign state achieve equity on its own? Is predistributive justice which, in the process of achieving good results involves tackling vested interests mentioned earlier in my presentation possible on a sovereign case-by-sovereign case basis? Can the most vulnerable achieve what is theirs by right if countries continue to interpret resolutions as colonizing and invasive? Can a sovereign state protect its citizens from massive financial crises, local and international, on its own? Can the huge discrepancies in economic development and social protection be solved in isolation? Finally, can we act individually when the root causes of social and economic inequity are global in nature? In other words, can we truly reclaim social Europe while acting outside European and international solidarity?

In my reflection I argued that one cannot expect a more social Europe without seriously interrogating and challenging the global economic model which is exploitative, divisive and polarising. The challenge that Europe is facing in protecting its most vulnerable citizens and residents is essentially moral, ethical and ideological in nature. What I have advocated for in my essay is a Europe that is desipherable to its citizens. An ethical Europe that is steeped in the practice of truth, justice, inclusion and fairness. A Europe that cannot be selective with solidarity. A Europe that, in the footsteps of Lorenzo Milani, and in the words of Pope Francis, gives back the word to the poor, because without the word there is neither dignity nor freedom and justice.

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Her Excellency Marie-Louise Coleiro-Preca, President of Malta, addressing the First Working Session.



Round Table on 'Reclaiming Social Europe in the Shadows of a Global Predatory Economy' at the Arraiolos Meeting 2017.



Introductory Remarks to the First Working Session of the Arraiolos Meeting 2017 by Professor Carmel Borg on the theme 'Reclaiming Social Europe in the Shadows of a Global Predatory Economy'.



A view to the Malta Arraiolos Meeting 2017 in session on the First day at the Grandmaster's Palace, Valletta.



H.E. Alexander Van der Bellen, President of Austria and H.E. Rumen Radev, President of Bulgaria in discussion following the First Working Group Session.



Discussion following the Introductory Remarks of the Guest Speaker Prof. Carmel Borg by H.E. Kersti Kaljulaid, President of Estonia.



H.E. Frank-Walter Steinmeier, President of GERMANY and
H.E. Prokopios Pavlopoulos, President of GREECE.



H.E. Raimonds Vējonis, President of LATVIA and
H.E. Andrzej Duda, President of POLAND.