

WELCOME ADDRESS

On behalf of the Government of Malta, Ministry for Home Affairs, Security and Employment

To be delivered by the Permanent Secretary

Ms Joyce Dimech

31st Conference of Directors of Prison and Probation Services (CDPPS)
Grand Hotel Excelsior, Valletta — 3 June 2026 at 09:00

Mr Hugh Chetwynd, Head of the Department on Deprivation of Liberty and Executive Secretary to the CPT

Mr Jorge Monteiro, President of the Council for Penological Co-operation

Mr Christopher Siegersma, Chief Executive Officer of the Correctional Services Agency

Distinguished Directors, honoured delegates, colleagues and friends

Meriba – Welcome

It is both an honour and a privilege to welcome you, on behalf of the Government of Malta, to Valletta - our ancient capital and, for these two days, home to European dialogue and reflection.

Malta may be small, but we stand firmly committed to the rule of law, to human dignity, and to the humane treatment of all persons deprived of their liberty.

It is therefore a matter of great pride for us to host this 31st Conference – bringing together 125 delegates from 39 countries in a powerful demonstration of responsibility.

Because the challenges we face are not national – they are universal!

This year's theme — Persons with Specific Needs and Vulnerabilities — goes to the very core of our systems. Across our prisons and probation services we encounter people whose lives are shaped by mental health conditions, trauma, disability, age, or displacement.

This confronts us with a fundamental question:

Are our systems designed for all the people in our care?

A modern correctional system must do more than just manage. It must understand. It must adapt. And it must respond.

We must ensure that no individual is left behind simply because the system was not designed with them in mind.

This brings me to a set of other questions:

Are we recognising individual needs from the outset?
Investing in our staff, and ensuring that reintegration is not an afterthought but a central objective?

This means drawing on the Council of Europe's guidance – not just as a reference, but as a driver for real, practical change on the ground.

In Malta, as in your countries, reform is ongoing.

Over the next two days, you will focus on those most at risk of being overlooked – and on the critical link between prison and probation.

This Conference is not just about sharing experiences. It is about challenging ourselves, identifying what works, and turning discussion into action.

Tomorrow's visit to a Maltese correctional facility is part of that openness. We invite you to see where we stand – our progress, our

challenges, and the work still ahead – and to engage with us in the same spirit of honesty and learning.

Distinguished delegates,

Let this Conference be not only a space for discussion, but a catalyst for action.

Let us use this time together to reaffirm a common principle: effective justice systems are not only firm, but fair, and above all, responsive to the needs of every individual.

On behalf of the Government of Malta, I wish you productive and meaningful deliberations.

Welcome to Malta. Welcome to Valletta.

Grazzi ħafna — Thank you very much