

## **Inauguration of the Malta Presidency Stamp**

**25 June 2025, Strasbourg (France),**

Speech by Theodoros Rousopoulos  
President of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe

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Honourable Prime Minister,

Honourable Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs,

Excellencies,

Ladies and gentlemen,

My son Vasilis—now 29—was just 10 years old when he took part in a national essay competition in Greece. He won first prize. The essay was published by a well-known publishing house under the title: “My Grandpa, the postman who walked two times the perimeter of the Earth.” And it was true. Because my father, as a postman for decades in a small city in southern Greece, walked nearly 30 kilometers every day—through heat and rain, across years and decades—delivering letters to isolated villages in the mountains.

So, as the son of a postman, I carry this legacy. When I was a boy, my father would take me with him to the post office in the late afternoon. He had to sort the letters and prepare the route for the next day. It was the early seventies. We had no television at home. But we had stamps. And those miniature, colorful windows into faraway lands became my way of traveling. They sparked my imagination. They taught me wonder, curiosity, and the magic of distance made tangible.

At first glance, a stamp may appear as a simple formality—a square of paper stuck onto an envelope. But stamps are much more. They are miniature diplomats. They travel from country to country, silently carrying the identity, the creativity, the pride of a nation. They are history you can hold in your hand, diplomacy you can send in the mail.

So, as you understand, I have more than others reason to warmly congratulate the Maltese Presidency for this beautiful commemorative stamp. The design is rich in meaning—featuring the sun, the sea, a spiral inspired by Malta’s ancient heritage, and the traditional Maltese fishing boat with its colorful eye painted on the bow. These symbols are not only striking—they express the soul of the islands: their energy, their history, their connection to the Mediterranean, and their spirit of openness.

I met Shelley Borg, the student who designed it. She is almost the age of my daughter Anna, who is a graphic designer too. So, forgive me for involving all my family in this case of the small Maltese window to the world, but I preferred to express my emotions rather than give you a more formal speech.

Though images now are everywhere in our everyday life—through screens that we hold in our hands—allow me to nostalgically go back to my childhood whenever I see a stamp.

Thank you.