



**JUSTICE AND PEACE
COMMISSION**

2023

ANNUAL REPORT



About us

The mission of Justice and Peace is that of “keeping the eyes of the Church open, its heart sensitive and its hand prepared for the work of charity which it is called upon to realize in the world.” (Paul VI, Address to the Pontifical Commission for Justice and Peace, 1967).

The Justice and Peace Commission in Malta fulfils this Mission by promoting the integral development of the person in the light of the Gospel and in line with the Social Doctrine of the Church.

It focuses on issues of justice and peace in the belief that personal and communal wellbeing can only be achieved in the context of just and peaceful relationships which respect the limits of our common home.

Our vision & hopes for society

A society in which the human dignity and the human rights of all – and especially those of the most vulnerable – are respected, and a culture of waste is replaced by a culture of encounter which helps us recognize each other as brothers and sisters.



A politics characterized by respectful dialogue, truthfulness & justice



A more sustainable & socially just economy



A culture of encounter instead of a culture of waste & indifference



Highlight

Justice and Peace Europe international workshop and general assembly

Nearly fifty delegates from Justice and Peace Commissions and other invited guests from all over Europe gathered in Valletta from 10-13 November for the 2023 International Workshop and General Assembly. At the opening conference, Commission president Daniel Darmanin and Justice and Peace Europe acting president Dr Cécile Dubernet welcomed guests in the Oratory of the Immaculate Conception at the Jesuit Church in Valletta. In the presence of Archbishop Scicluna, Sr. Alessandra Smerilli, Secretary of the Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development introduced the theme of this year's International Workshop: "The changing world of work: a transversal justice issue".

After taking part in the morning workshops, in the afternoon, participants crossed the Grand Harbour to visit Fort Saint Angelo and pray for peace in the Saint Anne Chapel on the top of the fortifications. On Sunday, lunch at the Soup Kitchen in Valletta was followed by a Symbolic Action in Underground Valletta. During this moment of prayer, delegates expressed their personal reasons for hope in a tormented world, whilst remembering all victims of war and violence.

The works of the General Assembly concluded on Monday with Mass presided by Bishop Galea Curmi in the chapel of St Calcedonius in the Archbishop's Curia.



Symbolic Action for peace and justice which took place in Underground Valletta.

The changing world of work - a transversal justice issue

In her [keynote speech](#), St Alessandra Smerilli, secretary of the Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development, addressed the meaning of work, the relationship between work and care and the myth of meritocracy.

As the world of work undergoes profound transformations, she pointed out that “especially in the world of work, it is essential to underline more and more forcefully that what the market rewards, is not always what society values the most”. She therefore urged all those involved with the topic of work and workers to restart by focusing on the discarded workers. After all, she continued, “a society cannot progress by discarding. A good cannot be good for me if it is not good for the other person as well”.

On Saturday morning, the workshop programme continued with a plenary session which discussed the following questions: “Are workers’ rights under threat? Which rights? Which workers?” After this introductory session which saw the participation of Malta Chamber CEO Dr Marthese Portelli and Mr Lorenzo Vella, Head of the European Commission Representation in Malta, participants split into thematic workshops which addressed the topics of the platform economy, accidents and deaths on construction sites, the culture of permanent availability and the changing relationship of young people to work.



Sr Smerilli delivering the keynote speech at the opening of the Justice and Peace Europe International Workshop.

Justice & Peace Europe lecture

The Oratory of Saint John's Co-Cathedral was the venue for the annual Justice and Peace Lecture which took place during the Justice and Peace Europe International Workshop and General Assembly. Standing in front of Caravaggio's painting of the beheading of Saint John, Jenny Sinclair, the founder and director of "Together for the Common Good", delivered an inspiring and thought-provoking speech under the title "Written in blood", where she called for a Church which is "transformational and not only useful".

According to Sinclair, these days, many people in the Church find it challenging to speak truth to power and many are unfamiliar with the authentic tradition of Catholic social thought. But martyrs, she reminded attendees, are not made differently from the rest of us. They are ordinary people who fall in love with God and see the world through God's eyes.

The invitation for Christians is therefore that of looking at the Baptist depicted in Caravaggio's masterpiece, "representing all the martyrs to justice, all the small acts of heroism, the Holy Innocents and the suffering poor in our own countries. In Catholic doctrine there is no such thing as a private faith. So we are called to answer the difficult question: Whose side are you on?"



Jenny Sinclair delivering her lecture in the oratory of St John's Co-Cathedral.

Research & Advocacy

- **Health and safety in construction industry**

In 2023, the Commission carried out a scientific research study to better understand the root causes of workplace tragedies in Malta's construction industry.

This research project was initiated in late 2022 in response to an increasing number of serious accidents at construction sites, where 25 construction workers lost their lives between 2019 and 2022. This project involved conducting over 40 interviews with workers, employers, professionals, and organisational representatives in this sector. The study will be launched in January 2024.

The Commission also submitted its feedback, as part of the public consultation on proposed regulations of the Contractor's Licence.

- **Meetings with stakeholders and policymakers**

A meeting with Dr Alfred Sant, Member of the European Parliament, was held in April to discuss various social themes, including issues of sustainability and injustice linked to the pension system.

The Commission also accepted the invitation of Mr Stanley Zammit, Opposition spokesperson for Planning, Construction, Research and Innovation to take part in a dialogue session with other e-NGOs on the environment and development.

Commission members also participated in a bilateral meeting with representatives from the Ministry for Social Policy and Children's Rights, to provide feedback on the renewed National Strategy for Poverty Reduction and Social Inclusion 2025-2035.



Mark Cachia, executive office of the Commission, at the dialogue session held in Parliament on the environment and development.

Media presence

- Press releases and statements

In the lead up to Workers Day, the Commission issued a [press release](#) to express its concern regarding the injustice suffered by non-EU persons working in Malta who, despite paying National Insurance contributions, do not receive a pension.

Following the Government's initial refusal to set up a public inquiry to investigate the circumstances surrounding the collapse of the building in Corradino which took the life of Jean-Paul Sofia, the Commission published a [statement](#) calling for the quest for truth and justice not to be stifled by interests which are contrary to the common good.

On the 10th December, the 75th anniversary of the Declaration of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, a [press release](#) was issued. This statement unreservedly condemns the horrific acts of violence that are ravaging the Holy Land and its people, whilst calling for a radical shift from a global paradigm of violent war and revenge to a paradigm of just peace and reconciliation.

- Articles

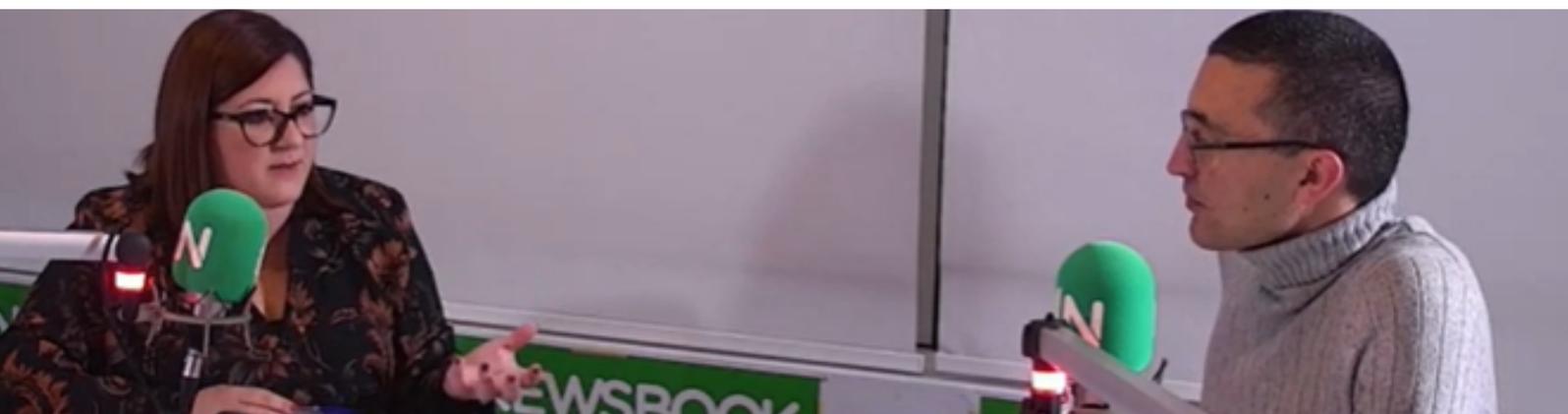
Apart from regularly posting articles on its [website](#), the Commission was also asked to write articles for Knisja 2000 on the theme of [hospitality](#), as well as Leĥen is-Sewwa with an [article](#) on a consistent life ethic.

On the 1st anniversary of the start of the Ukraine war, Daniel Darmanin, president of the Commission, wrote an [op-ed](#) in the Times of Malta.

- Interviews & podcasts

Commission representatives were invited as guests on various programmes discussing peace and justice issues.

In the first part of 2023, Mark Cachia continued hosting [rethink.mt](#) podcasts to follow up on the Pope's visit to Malta. Topics discussed included good governance and the Church in Malta.



Mark Cachia being interviewed on RTK103 regarding the role of the EU in promoting peace and justice.

Resources

- Lent resource guide
- World Day of Peace resources

The Ring, the Sandals and the Robe is a resource guide for young people which is based on the parable of the prodigal son.

Although the activities proposed in the guide are meant to be proposed as a half-day retreat or as a series of three meetings during Lent, youth leaders can also adapt the material proposed depending on the needs of their group.

The guide is available in both Maltese and English.

Every year on January 1, the Holy Father marks the World Day of Peace with a special message inviting all people to reflect on the important work of building peace.

“Artificial Intelligence and Peace” was the theme chosen by Pope Francis for the 2024 World Day of Peace.

Read more about how to pray, learn, and act with this World Day of Peace [resource pack](#).



Outreach

- **The Letter: A message for our earth**

The Interdiocesan Environment and the Justice and Peace Commissions, in collaboration with the Franciscan Friars, organized an activity in September to commemorate the Season of Creation 2023.

Around eighty people gathered at the Church of Santa Marija tal-Angli, in Baħar iċ-Ċagħaq, to watch the documentary “The Letter: A Message for our Earth”. In this documentary, five people from the four corners of the world – Senegal, the Amazon Forest, India, and Hawaii – travel to Rome to meet Pope Francis. They share with him their experiences of how they are responding with hope and determination to the environmental crisis that is having a strong impact on their communities.

After the screening, Fr Mark Ciantar from the Environment Commission led a short discussion. Participants once again emphasized the importance of listening to the call for conversion, and start taking seriously our individual and collective responsibility to take care of our common home.

- **Sejjaħli b’Ismi**

After 7 months and a half of touring, 24 locations and one online exhibition, it was time to bring to an end the Sejjaħli B’Ismi exhibition.

This intercultural project commemorated the 20th anniversary since the first major disembarkation of asylum seekers on our shores.

- **Rethink public dialogue**

To wrap up the first season of rethink.mt a public dialogue was held on the 1st of June at Suq tal-Belt.

Members of the public were invited to join in the conversations and discuss topics including migration and cultural heritage.



Rethink.mt public dialogue held at Suq tal-Belt.

Formation

- **Conference on neutrality**

Malta's Constitution defines Malta as a "neutral state actively pursuing peace, security and social progress among all nations by adhering to a policy of non-alignment and refusing to participate in any military alliance".

To celebrate the 60th anniversary of Pacem in Terris, the Commission organized an expert-panel discussion on how Malta's neutrality can serve the cause of peace.

This event saw the participation of Prof Anna Khakee, Fr Carlo Calleja, Prof Edward Warrington, Mr Ranier Fsadni and Ambassador Vanessa Frazier.

- **Schools**

Teachers at St Aloysius Primary School as well as 6th formers at St Martin's College and St Aloysius 6th Form attended workshops which helped participants reflect on their role in the areas of peacebuilding and responsible citizenship.

- **MUSEUM members**

During the months of January and February, Daniel Darmanin and Mark Cachia, were invited by MUSEUM members to give a series of lectures on Catholic Social Teaching as part of the Society's ongoing formation programme.

The topics discussed were social justice, immigration and racism, and the common good.

- **Curia open day**

As part of the programme of activities organized by the Archbishop's Curia during its open day, the Commission held a workshop on the theme of economic growth.



Expert-panel discussion on neutrality which was held at the Archbishop's Curia.

Synod on synodality

Justice and Peace Malta president Daniel Darmanin actively contributed to the synodal process which is currently taking place across the Catholic Church.

In February 2023, Daniel represented Justice and Peace Europe at the Continental Assembly of the Synod in Prague. More than 200 delegates - including Archbishop Charles Scicluna who led the Maltese and Gozitan delegation - met in the Czech Republic to continue the process of discernment on the profound renewal of the Church demanded by the holy people of God.

Furthermore, Justice and Peace Europe was one of the partner organisations which helped in preparing the “Together: Gathering of the people of God” prayer vigil in September 2023.

Organized by the Taizé community at the invitation of Pope Francis, and in the presence of around forty church leaders from various denominations, this vigil entrusted to the Holy Spirit the work of the synodal assembly of the Catholic Church which began soon afterwards.

Stefan Lunte (Secretary General of Justice and Peace Europe), and Daniel Darmanin (member of the Justice and Peace Europe Executive Committee) were both present in Rome on this occasion to help in the last-minute preparations and participate in the vigil.



Cardinal Mario Grech, Secretary General of the Synod of Bishops, together with the Maltese and Gozitan delegation during the Continental Assembly of the Synod in Prague.



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