



SOVEREIGN MILITARY HOSPITALLER ORDER
OF ST. JOHN OF JERUSALEM OF RHODES AND OF MALTA

PERMANENT OBSERVER MISSION TO THE UNITED NATIONS OFFICE
AND OTHER INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS IN GENEVA

**Inter-Parliamentary Union
148th IPU Assembly**

**Panel discussion on interfaith dialogue:
“Building bridges through interfaith dialogue for more peaceful and inclusive societies”**

**Intervention by H.E. Ambassador Marie-Thérèse PICTET-ALTHANN,
Permanent Observer to the Inter-Parliamentary Union – Head of Delegation**

Geneva, 25 March 2024

Mr. Moderator,
Honourable panellists,
Distinguished Delegates,

The Sovereign Order of Malta thanks IPU for organising this important panel discussion on interfaith dialogue and the panellists for their contribution. This panel builds on the 2023 Parliamentary Conference on Interfaith Dialogue in Marrakesh, in which we actively participated, This unique initiative which resulted in the Marrakesh Declaration, brought together parliamentarians, religious leaders, faith-based and civil society organisations, and the academia, was an opportunity for all these different actors to interact and exchange with each other to reach a common goal for more peaceful and inclusive societies.

Our Permanent Mission in Geneva participated during this on-going session of the Human Rights Council in the Interactive Dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on Freedom of religion or belief – whom I wish to personally thank for her extraordinary work – and in the Panel on countering religious hatred. We stressed that “it is our common responsibility, in full accordance with the Istanbul Process for combating intolerance, discrimination and incitement to hatred, to promote diversity and freedom of expression in the multicultural world of today”.

In order to deescalate tensions, parliamentarians and religious leaders must work together to promote faith-literacy and combat extremism through interfaith dialogue, thus building a culture of understanding and ultimately peace.

We welcome the planned second Parliamentary Conference on Interfaith Dialogue to take place in Rome, at the invitation of the Italian Parliament, during the 2025 Jubilee Year declared by His Holiness Pope Francis. The Sovereign Order of Malta, a lay-religious institution present in 120 countries worldwide, which has its institutional headquarters in Rome, would be more than happy



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to cooperate with the Italian Parliament and Senator Cassini, with the possibility of organising a high-level event during the Conference.

Thank you.