



COSP19 General Debate

Malta Statement delivered by HE Natasha Meli, Permanent Representative of Malta to the United Nations, 10 June 2026

Mr. President,

Malta aligns itself with the statement delivered by the European Union.

As we mark the 20th Anniversary of the adoption of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, we are urged to look at the progress made and the challenges that remain.

20 years ago, Malta barely had any disability-led advocacy. It did not have an independent monitoring mechanism for disability rights. Persons with disabilities who required support with decision-making were either interdicted or incapacitated by the courts. Access to the labour market was largely symbolic, and independent and community living were nothing more than a pipe dream.



The CRPD set in motion a process that led to seismic shifts. It formalised obligations for change, while empowering advocates by legitimising their decades-long fight to advance the social model.

Today we recognise the advocacy of Malta's Deaf community - pioneers since 1972, who are here with us today - as they celebrate 10 years since Maltese Sign Language became an official language.

We also recognise Agenzija Sapport, the State disability service provider, now led by a former activist, that was crucial in rolling out State-funded personal assistance and a personal budgets reform, while implementing Government's policy commitment towards de-institutionalisation.

Measures to implement Article 19 of the CRPD, led by persons with disabilities themselves, have built on initiatives which include reforms to social protection systems, extending eligibility in line with the Convention. This collaboration is hard-wired into Government's



policy-making and legislative reforms, through its obligation to actively involve the ENGAGE Committee that they lead

Additionally, Malta's adoption of the Personal Autonomy Act this year, ensures that persons are no longer deprived of legal capacity, embedding supported decision-making in law.

This law was adopted alongside legislation guaranteeing multi-stakeholder action to safeguard persons with disabilities from exploitation, violence and abuse, after Malta previously extended hate crimes and hate speech protections and comprehensively banned forced sterilisation.

Mr President,

Malta is proud to be a key player in advancing joint action at various levels. This aligns with our view that it is a shared responsibility and moral obligation to make sure that there will still be a CoSP in 20 years' time, with an effective human rights mechanism underpinning it.



**PERMANENT MISSION
OF MALTA TO THE UNITED NATIONS
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Malta reaffirms its commitment to continue working towards this goal,
alongside UN partners, Member States and Civil Society.

Thank you.