

Mr. Sanjay Pradhan
Chief Executive Officer
Open Government Partnership
1100 13th Street NW
Suite 800
Washington, DC 20005
USA

07 March 2022

Dear Mr. Pradhan,

I write on behalf of the Government of Malta ('the Government') with reference to your letter of the 1 March 2022 addressed to the Hon. Dr. Robert Abela, Prime Minister of Malta regarding Malta's participation in the Open Government Partnership ('OGP').

Government wishes to assure the OGP that the any administrative shortcoming was not due to any unwillingness to live up to OGP standards or to any lack of esteem for the organisation, on the contrary the Government remains committed to uphold OGP standards.

In fact over the years in question Malta has undergone several processes of review by international organisations and bodies and it has implimented major constitutional and legal reforms for the further effective implimentation of the principles of the rule of law, accountability, standards in public life and the separation of powers.

The reforms resulted from an elaborate process of interaction mainly with the Venice Commission but also involving the principal European institutions.

The OGP will be aware that Malta also undergoes a number of periodic reviews in a number of international organisations such as the European Union, the Council of Europe (including the Council's Group of States Against Corruption (GRECO)) and the United Nations on subjects which are also integral to the mission of the OGP.

Malta is also currently in the process of finalizing a number of reforms in the field of freedom of expression which are particularly focused on the protection of journalists and other media actors and persons in public life (who also include civil society actors) and on protection from Strategic Lawsuits Against Public Participation (SLAPP). The Government's proposals on the subject have been tabled in Parliament thereby making them available to the media and to civil society which have contributed to the debate on them. The proposals are also being discussed by a Committee of Experts composed of persons from all 'sides of the business'



which was established further to the recommendations contained in the report of the Public Inquiry into the murder of journalist Daphne Caruana Galizia in October 2017.

Malta is therefore not lacking in good will in its commitment to the principles and aims of the OGP. As you are aware however, Malta is a small country the administrative capacity of which has been strained over the last years both through the pressure of rapid reform processes and due to the COVID-19 pandemic which has placed unprecedented demands on Government resources.

In the circumstances the Government welcomes the OGP's offer of support and its invitation to discuss the way out of the current difficulties.

The Government looks forward to coming to an amicable understanding with the OGP to resolve the current situation vis-a-vis Malta's OGP participation in a positive spirit of mutual cooperation.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of several overlapping, stylized strokes.

Hon. Dr Edward Zammit Lewis
Minister for Justice and Governance