



The European Midwives Association (EMA) welcomes the address given to their annual general meeting by the Honourable Minister Mr. John Dalli, Minister for Health and Social Welfare in Malta and endorses **all** the points he identified in his speech.

Mr. Dalli spoke about the paradigm shift that was required in the maternity services in Malta in order to develop a sustainable model of care that is cost effective and more than hospital based. He noted that the development of primary care services requires the full utilization of midwives alongside other health care professionals.

The Minister recognized the current medicalisation of childbirth in Malta, the appropriate use of technology, the scope of midwifery practice and stated that 'proper midwifery care can set the gold standards for the 'safe, competent and humanistic care of the women'.

Current data on the outcomes of pregnancy and childbirth in Malta reveal (amongst others):

- an induction rate of 36%,
- a caesarean section rate of 33%, and
- a breastfeeding rate of 59%.

These data compare unfavourably with those of many other European member states, particularly those where midwives are able to fulfill their role. The absence of midwives' involvement in the provision of antenatal care, an activity legislated for in Article 42 of the Directive 2005/36/EU, is unacceptable. EMA calls on the Minister and his Government to seek ways of rectifying this anomalous situation.

In doing so, the EMA believes that the childbearing women of Malta will experience a decrease in unnecessary intervention in childbirth, with subsequent long term public health benefits for both women and their families.

Deirdre Daly
President
European Midwives Association
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