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Mr Daniel Azzopardi  
Ambassador  
Permanent representative of Malta to the European Union

Brussels, 6 September 2018

*Dear Ambassador Azzopardi,*

Thank you for your letter of 12 July 2018, informing me about your new role as Permanent Representative of Malta to the EU and giving me account of the conclusions of the Magisterial Inquiry conducted by a member of Malta's judiciary on the allegations that the Prime Minister of Malta and his family were owners of a Panamian company as a vehicle for illicit transactions and money laundering activities.

Please note that neither the report of the ad hoc Delegation on the rule of law in Malta of 31st November/1st December 2017, which I chaired, neither the conclusions of my visit to Malta this past June with colleagues David Casa and Sven Giegold, claimed as factual that the Prime Minister, or his wife, were the beneficial owners of the Panamian company E-grant, as reported by assassinated journalist Daphne Caruana Galizia.

It is factual, however, that both Mr. Keith Schembri, Chief of Staff of the Prime Minister, and Dr. Konrad Mizzi, Minister for Tourism, owned undeclared offshore companies in Panama, which would have, according to emails tracked in the Panama Papers, two Dubai entities as their "main target clients" - which contradicts Dr. Mizzi's claims that his Panamian company, owned by a trust in New Zealand, was meant to manage solely his family assets.

Having due regard to the principle of the presumption of innocence, which should, of course, have been observed if the Maltese authorities and courts had ever carried out a proper inquiry into these cases, I believe that the facts render Mr. Schembri and Dr. Mizzi unfit for public office in a democratic country - a conclusion all the more evident in a context where the EU is legislating to push for more financial and corporate transparency and where the transparency of financial activities of politicians takes a central role.

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On the other hand, I wish to highlight the full conclusions of the Magisterial Inquiry have not been published. I find this regrettable given the importance of the matter, and I hope that the Attorney General will authorise its publication in full.

Finally, I am particularly concerned for the level of polarisation of Maltese society and political actors over the scandals afflicting the current government over the past few years, which has reached an unacceptable level of verbal violence, where, for instance, government ministers are actively endorsing calls for “hanging” my colleague David Casa. It is for the Prime Minister and his cabinet to convey a message of tolerance, free speech and tolerate public criticism and reporting, not further instil hate speech and violence.

*Best regards,  
Ana Gomes*

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