

FROM A EUROPEAN POINT OF VIEW

THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE CONVENTIONS

HISTORIANS and upholders of the European ideal usually lay much stress on the great and luminous milestones of European unity – Churchill's 'Europe, Unite' speech, Monnet's proposal for the formation of the Coal and Steel Community, the signing of the Rome Treaty, and so on. These events are commemorated every year – and rightly so. However we should not ignore the small and unobtrusive measures which have helped remove all those little barriers to European unification. On 18th April the Prime Minister laid on the table copies of two treaties which the Maltese Government had signed in September 1967 and which are highly significant in this regard. The first one is the European Agreement on Regulations Governing the Movement of Persons between member states of the Council of Europe and the second one is the European Convention on the equivalence of Periods of University Study.

Many of us have experienced the humiliation of being stopped – and sometimes turned back – at frontiers because our passport lacked the odd permit or the right visa. The object of the first Agreement is to allow citizens of the signatories to visit one another's country without a visa for a stay of not more than three months on the presentation of a passport or other identification papers.

The second measure is perhaps more important. One of the objects of the Council of Europe is to pursue a policy of common action in cultural and scientific matters and the university constitutes one of the principal sources – if not *the* principal source – of the intellectual activity of a country. It is in this spirit that the member-states of the Council of Europe passed the European Convention on the equivalence of diplomas leading to admission to universities and the European Cultural Convention. The object of the treaty laid on the table of the House of Representatives by the Prime Minister is to establish equivalence of periods of study in modern languages between universities in the various member-states of the Council of Europe. The scope of the treaty seems rather limited but the study of modern languages is one of the major fields where exchanges of students are necessary and imperative. Languages are only the first step, for in the same treaty the member-states of the Council of Europe bind themselves to consider the means to be adopted in order to recognise a period of study in a university of another member country by students of disciplines other than modern languages and especially by students of pure and applied sciences. The problem of equivalence is very complicated; in Malta's case there is an added complication because in countries where universities are autonomous the Government binds itself only to 'transmit the text of

the present Convention to the authorities of the universities', and to 'encourage the favourable consideration and application by them of the principles' enunciated in this Convention. It would be foolish to jump to conclusions and make snap decisions, but now that our educational authorities are becoming increasingly conscious of the value of international acceptability of Maltese qualifications the possibilities opened up by the signature of this Convention should be exploited to the full. Knowledge knows no frontiers and our intellectuals, young and old, should be given every facility to study abroad and to cross-fertilise their ideas with those of foreign students.

In this way our island will inch its way, steadily though slowly, towards the mainstream of European civilisation.

G.Z.

THE FOLLOWING IS A COMPLETE LIST OF COUNCIL OF EUROPE CONVENTIONS SIGNED BY MALTA TO DATE:

European Cultural Convention, Paris, 19th Dec. 1954	2.5.66	12.12.66
European Agreement on the Exchange of Therapeutic Substances of Human Origin, Paris, 15th Dec. 1958.	2.5.66	12.12.66
European Agreement on Travel by Young Persons on Collective Passports between the Member Countries of the Council of Europe, Paris, 16th Dec. 1961.	2.5.66	12.12.66
European Convention on the Liability of Hotel-Keepers concerning the Property of their Guests, Paris, 17 Dec. 1962.	2.5.66	12.12.66
European Agreement on the Exchanges of Blood-Grouping Reagents, Strasbourg, 14th May, 1962.	16.6.66	28.2.67
European Convention for the protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, Rome, 4th Nov. 1958.	12.12.66	23.1.67
Protocol No. 1 to the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, Paris, 20th March, 1952.	12.12.66	23.1.67
Protocol No. 2 to the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, conferring upon the European Court of Human Rights competence to give advisory opinions, Strasbourg, 6th May, 1963.	12.12.66	23.1.67

Protocol No. 3 to the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms amending Articles 29, 30 and 34 of the Convention, Strasbourg, 6th May, 1963.	12.12.66	23.1.67
Protocol No. 5 to the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, amending Articles 22 and 40 of the Convention, Strasbourg, 20th Jan. 1966.	12.12.66	23.1.67
European Convention for the Peaceful Settlement of Disputes, Strasbourg, 29th April, 1957.	12.12.66	28.2.67
Second Protocol to the General Agreement on Privileges and Immunities of the Council of Europe (Provisions in respect of the Members of the European Commission of Human Rights), Paris, 15th Dec. 1956.	12.12.66	
Fourth Protocol to the General Agreement on Privileges and Immunities of the Council of Europe (Provisions concerning the European Court of Human Rights), Paris, 16th Dec. 1961.	12.12.66	
Agreement on the temporary Importation, free of Duty, of Medical, Surgical and Laboratory Equipment for use on free loan in Hospitals and other Medical Institutions for purposes of Diagnosis or Treatment, Strasbourg, 28th April, 1960.	21.4.67	22.9.67
Agreement on the Exchange of War Cripples between Member Countries of the Council of Europe with a view to Medical Treatment, Paris, December 13, 1955.	24.5.67	22.9.67
European Convention on the Equivalence of Periods of University Study, Paris, December 15, 1956.	22.9.67	7.5.68
European Agreement on Regulations Governing the Movement of Persons Between Member States of the Council of Europe, Paris, December 13, 1957.	22.9.67	7.5.68
Agreement on the Instruction and Education of Nurses, Strasbourg, 25th Oct. 1967.	7.5.68	
European Convention on the Academic Recognition of University Qualifications, Paris, 14th Dec. 1959.	7.5.68	
European Convention on the Equivalence of Diplomas leading to admission to Universities, Paris, 11th Dec. 1953.	7.5.68	
European Convention on Social and Medical Assistance and Protocol.	7.5.68	

European Convention on the Adoption of Children, Stras- 7.5.68
bourg, April 24, 1967.

We sincerely thank our Government for signing such a handsome number of Conventions in the brief span of two years. Every Convention signed and/or ratified is a further link that binds us to Europe.

The United Nations is this year celebrating International Human Rights Year, and our Government has appointed an *ad hoc* committee, presided over by His Honour Mr. Justice Prof. J.J. Cremona, to organize activities in this connection. The committee is doing its level best to spread the knowledge of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and foster among our people an awareness of, and respect for the fundamental rights of the individual, as envisaged in that splendid document.

May we humbly but firmly urge our government to follow the example of most member states of the Council of Europe and completely ratify the European Convention of Human Rights without harbouring any further misgivings with regard to the Right to Individual Petition. To say – as somebody seems to be saying in Malta – that the recognition of such a Right to Individual Petition, and consequently of the jurisdiction of the European Court of Human Rights, would imply an interference by that Court in our juridical affairs is naive. Of the sixteen countries which have signed the European Convention (France has not signed it, because of alleged technical difficulties stemming from French Criminal Law; nor has Switzerland, because of the well-known fact that Swiss women do not enjoy the right to vote), eleven – including Italy and Great Britain – have ratified the Right to Individual Petition. Frankly, it seems preposterous to have Maltese judges sitting on the European Court of Human Rights, and yet not recognise that Court's jurisdiction in our Island; or to have signed or accepted *on paper* those Fundamental Rights, but refuse to take the necessary steps whereby their application is enforced and safeguarded.

In our view, acceptance of the Right to Individual Petition and recognition of the European Court of Human Rights would be the most effective and praiseworthy manner of celebrating International Human Rights Year; and of confirming our support for the Council of Europe and what it stands for.

J.M.

A EUROPEAN EDUCATION

THE Government has taken welcome steps to improve Malta's cultural contacts with other European countries. The flow of students and graduates to and from Italy, France and other countries has increased and is likely to go on increasing. The next few years will see quite a number of Maltese graduates looking for

employment in their native country. It is a pity that the Government, while taking endless pains to make possible this cultural diversification, has not yet taken parallel action to ensure that these products of European universities will be treated as their qualifications demand.

In this respect 'Estacode', the code which contains the standing instructions on all matters relating to staff in the public service, still betrays our colonial past. In its sections on allowances to Primary and Secondary School Teachers it lays down that special allowances are payable to graduates; but while graduates of the University of Malta and of universities in the United Kingdom are automatically entitled to an additional payment, graduates of other universities will only receive their allowance 'where the degree is deemed by the Director of Education to be of equivalent standard'. Admittedly the education authorities must be allowed some discretion to decide on the value of different qualifications. What is surprising is that degrees of British universities are accepted automatically and indiscriminately while the degrees of other European universities must first satisfy the pundits at the Department of Education. The most surprising statement of all is that 'in considering (these) qualifications ... the Director of Education has regard to the standards accepted in the U.K.'

One cannot help feeling that the drafters of 'Estacode' regard British qualifications as the archetype of everything that is good and great in academic standards and that the degrees and diplomas of other countries are recognised only in so far as they approach this summit of perfection. The impression is clearly given that graduates of British universities have a right to all the advantages pertaining to their status while the products of European universities are recognised as graduates only as a matter of courtesy. Doubtless this situation, redolent of the worst colonial mentality, is anomalous in a country which has been independent for close on four years.

M.C.

COUNCIL OF EUROPE AND MALTESE SPORT

ORGANISED sport in Malta has long been handicapped by many obstacles, and especially by lack of funds.

In the past sport in Malta had no aid whatsoever from the authorities as it was self-developed and run as a pastime. To-day we are well aware that sport plays a most important role in life in many ways, and both for education and national prestige countries the world over are pouring vast sums of money in order to provide those facilities without which sport can make no headway.

As an active member of the Council of Europe since its admission in 1965, Malta has now been able to draw substantial aid from this body dealing specifically with sport. The country has been chosen as a specific centre for a Pilot Scheme for Sport. A pattern of sport development in Malta has been drawn

up and this is to take the form of expert advice on the one hand through expert coaches, and the provision of help in the creation of facilities in the form of equipment.

The Malta National Sports Board is the body working in close consultation with the Council of Europe Sports Section. Malta itself has been divided into a number of districts. Each district is now developing sport in many spheres principally with the aim of developing education through sport.

The Council of Europe is also providing equipment aids in order to foster sport. One such example will be the provision of film projectors to allow the showing of sport films and films specially made to instruct and show training and coaching of particular types of sport.

A Council of Europe expert, Mr. Lams, has already come to Malta and the scheme is to be put into effect as from July this year. Under the scheme experts in various sports will be coming over to Malta at three months intervals to train a nucleus of sport coaches in Malta over a period of five years.

It is also understood that should the Pilot Scheme Project be successful in Malta, the country will be chosen as a feeding centre for similar coaching projects in North African territories.

A.S.L.

EUROPE PRIZES

THE Italian city of Faenza has been awarded the Europe Prize for 1968. For many years, Faenza has made remarkable efforts to improve European understanding and friendship through: close contacts and exchanges of young people with other towns; its annual international exhibition of art ceramics for which it is internationally renowned; and participation in such events as Europe Day and the European Schools Day Competition.

This latter event consists in an essay competition among senior students of Secondary Schools all over Europe. The prize usually consists of a pleasure cruise on one of Europe's great rivers. This year – the competition is organised every year on Europe Day, May 5th – the candidates were asked to analyse the importance of European aid to the developing countries. The prize-giving ceremony will be held in Vienna on July 25th. The prize-winners will arrive in Vienna by boat after visits to Salzburg, Linz and the Abbey of Melk.

Incidentally, the Malta Council of the European Movement has already established contacts with the organizers to ensure that Maltese schoolchildren take part in next year's European Schools Day Competition – in the belief that nothing but good could accrue to our students by instilling in them an interest in European problems, and eventually by sending one or two of them on a pleasure trip along the Rhine or the Danube!