

Joint Statement on VNR of Malta 2025

This joint statement has been developed through a consultative process with Civil Society Organisations representing a diverse range of major group stakeholders, those working in the fields of Education and Academia, LGBTI rights, Children and Youth, Women, Older Persons, and Workers and Trade

Unions. The process was coordinated by the Maltese NGO Kopin with the support of the Eastern and Central Europe Regional Civil Society Engagement Mechanism.

2018 efforts to set up a transparent and evidence-based VNR review process was a necessary first step but wider engagement of stakeholder groups is required for truly effective whole-of-society participation.

Gaps remain that need to be acknowledged including decades of myopic GDP growth that has increased inequalities, harming low-skilled workers, increasing homelessness, substance abuse, and poverty among marginalised people, including older persons. We are very worried by misguided public displays of arrests and deportations of so-called irregular migrants.

Children and youth are keenly vocal about the deterioration of mental and physical well-being linked to diminishing public and green spaces, poor urban planning, air pollution, and a lack of effective traffic management. Many also ask for improved education, focusing on crucial life skills.

We hereby request our government to:

- i) Accelerate the implementation of pending measures, especially those addressing inequalities and supporting vulnerable groups, while continuing to focus on carrying forward the SDGs beyond 2030.
- ii) Address spillover effects stemming from unsustainable economic practices,
- iii) Engage meaningfully with CSOs beyond tick-the-box exercises.