

**Mediterranean Rehabilitation Conference
Malta, Forte S. Angelo 11-12 December 2000**

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Introduction

Carlo Marullo di Condojanni

Grand Chancellor of the Sovereign Military Order of Malta
Rector of the Accademia Internazionale Melitense

In consideration of the development of the Accademia Internazionale Melitense, the Sovereign Council, in its session of 6 December 2000, agreed to accept the Rector's proposal to divide it into three departments – historical-cultural, medical and diplomatic. While awaiting the necessary statutory amendments, steps were taken for an immediate launch of activities in the medical - scientific field.

The activities of the diplomatic department will be initiated in 2002 when the restoration of the Fort St. Angelo on Malta, headquarters of the Accademia, will be completed and seminar participants can also be housed there.

It is in this context that we launch the proceedings of the first international meeting entitled "Mediterranean Rehabilitation Conference" organised by the Accademia Internazionale within the framework of its medical scientific sector.

In the presence of H.M.E.H., Fra' Andrew Bertie, and of the representative of the President of Malta, I was particularly honoured to welcome the Prime Minister of the archipelago, the Hon. Dr. Edward Fenech Adami, who has agreed to open the meeting. Mediterranean experts have talked to us about extremely interesting matters from a scientific viewpoint.

This is certainly a specialised conference which we wanted to hold on Malta to stress the Order's medical and welfare aspect, always present alongside its religious character and historical commitment, in the wake of the tradition that placed the Grande Infermeria on Malta, beacon of medical science during the years the Knights were on the island.

In presenting the proceedings of the scientific meeting, I want to thank those who have contributed to the advance of the Accademia Internazionale Melitense, and in particular Prof. Paolo Caucci von Saucken who is its president. The conference was an opportunity to compare different schools and approaches with regards to scientific progress and the latest studies on rehabilitation.

Rehabilitation strategies were discussed to develop, hopefully, common projects, as well as scientific experiences of different health services and their planning on the basis of the different religious and socio-political areas.

Healthcare without borders, as stressed in the institutional aims of the Sovereign Military Order of Malta, for a more extensive and efficient humanitarian and hospitaller action. The following pages will certainly constitute a stimulus for further meetings in the Mediterranean area, in which the Order and Malta will be increasingly required to play a central role.

Finally, I want to express my gratitude to Prof. Salvatore Giaquinto, illustrious professor of neurorehabilitation, for organising and supervising the congress works.

We must also thank him for the conclusions that constitute a starting point for the Order's further activities in the medical-scientific research sector, and in particular in developing the cultural debate in the Mediterranean.

Malta, Fort St. Angelo, 1 November 2001